



For New October Revolutions!

Third International Conference of the ICL

SEE PAGE 2

**Declaration of Principles and
Some Elements of Program**

International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist)

SEE PAGE 9

**On the Origins and Development of Leninist
Organizational Practices**

SEE PAGE 24

**Organizational Rules
and Guidelines**

International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist)

SEE PAGE 31

Women and Permanent Revolution in South Africa

SEE PAGE 48

For New October Revolutions!

Third International Conference of the ICL

In early 1998, the Third International Conference of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist) was held in Europe. ICL sections in 12 countries elected delegates with decisive votes to the International Conference. The Conference was also heavily attended by members of ICL sections and youth organizations from around the world, as well as close sympathizers from countries where the ICL seeks to extend its presence, and youth who recently resigned from *Rifondazione Comunista* in Italy in political solidarity with the *Lega Trotskista d'Italia*, Italian section of the ICL.

A central purpose of the conference was to debate, amend and adopt the International Communist League's "Declaration of Principles and Some Elements of Program" and the "Organizational Rules and Guidelines." These international documents grow out of the Declaration of Principles of the Spartacist League/U.S. and the Spartacist League/U.S. Organizational Rules and Guidelines which have guided our work internationally for more than 30 years. The documents adopted by the Third International Conference are published in this *Spartacist*, along with a presentation by comrade Elizabeth Kendall on the historical development of Marxist organizational practice.

From its inception, the Spartacist League/U.S. struggled ceaselessly to break out of national isolation and build a Leninist-Trotskyist international. The adoption of these documents setting forth our international principles and organizational rules codifies the programmatic coherence of our small but genuinely international democratic-centralist vanguard. Especially with the world looking more like the pre-1914 period of increased inter-imperialist rivalries and nationalist revanchism leading to war, the Third International Conference served to arm the ICL for the tests we confront.

Ours is not an international dominated by large sections with the smaller ones relegated to the role of passive on-lookers. The avid participation of comrades from our new South African section on all questions under discussion, the

political dynamism of young cadre of the Mexican section, the determination of Polish cadre struggling to build a section under the difficult conditions of clerical reaction and capitalist counterrevolution, all were felt with great impact at this conference. The maturation of many of the ICL sections was seen in the written documents of the pre-conference discussion period, with national sections organizing educationals and discussions on key questions for their own sections (e.g., the Irish Civil War, the nature of the 1910 Mexican Revolution, the national oppression of the Basques in France, the role of *Solidarność* in capitalist Poland).

A related focus of discussion in this period has been the application in the post-Soviet world of the principle that "the main enemy is at home": with the breakdown of imperialism's U.S.-led common front against the USSR, militarism and national chauvinism draped in "anti-American" colors are on the rise in Europe and Japan. Our Japanese section, for example, faces a situation where "U.S. Bases Out of Japan" can become the common slogan of the far right wing and the opportunist, social-patriotic left.

The International Conference is the highest body of the ICL and elects an international central committee, the International Executive Committee (IEC). In accordance with democratic-centralism, delegates were elected on the basis of political program; in this case the document offered for a vote was the "Memorandum to the IEC on the Perspectives and Tasks of the ICL," adopted by the IEC plenum held in January 1996 (publicly available in *International Bulletin* No. 38).

The main theme of the 1996 IEC Memorandum was "dis-integrative pressures on the vanguard" in the post-Soviet period. That document observed that the political consciousness of the working class had been thrown back as a result of the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union—not everywhere, not evenly, but as a historical norm. The bourgeoisie asserted that the failure of the Soviet "experiment" discredited the theory and program of Marxism. Under the generally unfavorable conditions of this post-Soviet period, the IEC Memorandum politically armed ICL sections to fight centrist adaptations to this retrogression of consciousness by asserting the enduring validity of the "Russian question": the struggle for workers revolution and the creation of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The necessary instrumentality to achieve that is a Leninist-Trotskyist party. As the founder of American Trotskyism, James P. Cannon, defined it in 1939:

"The Russian question has been and remains the question of the revolution. The Russian Bolsheviks on November 7, 1917, once and for all, took the question of the workers' revolution out of the realm of abstraction and gave it flesh and blood reality....

"Our position on the Russian question is programmatic. In brief: The theoretical analysis—a degenerated Workers' State. The political conclusion—unconditional defense against external attack of imperialists or internal attempts at capitalist restoration....

"We defend the Soviet Union and its nationalized property... without putting as a prior condition the overthrow of the Stalinist bureaucracy."

—"Speech on the Russian Question," 15 October 1939
(*The Struggle for a Proletarian Party* [1943])

English Edition

SPARTACIST

An Organ of Revolutionary Marxism

Published by the International Executive Committee of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist)

EDITORIAL BOARD: Elizabeth Gordon (editor), James Robertson and Emily Tanner (associate editors), Helene Brosius, Jon Brule, George Foster, Jane Kerrigan, Len Meyers, Sam Price, Amy Rath, Reuben Samuels, Joseph Seymour, Alison Spencer

PRODUCTION MANAGER: Susan Fuller

CIRCULATION MANAGER: Jane Patterson

SPARTACIST PUBLISHING COMPANY
Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116, USA Phone: (212) 732-7862

Opinions expressed in signed articles or letters do not necessarily express the editorial viewpoint.

Number 54



Spring 1998



Novosti

Revolutionary soldiers march through Moscow under the banner of Communism, 1917. The October Revolution—the first successful conquest of state power by the proletariat—was led by the Bolshevik Party of Lenin and Trotsky on the basis of the internationalist program for world socialist revolution.

Prior to the Russian Revolution, Lenin looked back to Marx's writings on the Paris Commune—albeit a workers' seizure of power in only one city for only 90 days, it was the one concrete guide that Lenin had and he examined it critically.

A crucial point of application of the Russian question today is our program of unconditional military defense of the Chinese deformed workers state against capitalist counter-revolution. The key point for the ICL is that in order to restore capitalism the Chinese Stalinist bureaucracy has to break the resistance of the proletariat, which has already undertaken militant struggles against the economic consequences of pro-capitalist "market reforms." The publication of quadrilingual *Spartacist* (No. 53 of the English-language edition) on the origins of Chinese Trotskyism—whose history has been suppressed by the Chinese bureaucracy—is one aspect of the ICL's concerted efforts to bring revolutionary consciousness to the Chinese proletariat, and the large diaspora of Chinese workers and students. The outcome in China has huge stakes for the proletariat internationally.

Unlike the rest of the left which dances on the grave of the former Soviet Union, buying into the bourgeoisie's "death of communism" lie and giving up before the battle is joined for the fate of China, we urgently seek to effectively intervene as the subjective factor which will make the difference in the Chinese proletariat becoming a class *for* itself and fighting for political revolution against the Stalinist bureaucracy. As James P. Cannon said of the Russian Revolution even in its degenerated state:

"We want to advance the world revolution of the proletariat. This determines our attitude and approach to the Russian question. True, we want to see reality, but we are not disinterested observers and commentators. We do not examine the Russian revolution and what remains of its great conquests as though it were a bug under a glass. *We have an interest! We take part in the fight!*"

To rearm ourselves programmatically in this challenging post-Soviet world, in the interval between the codification of

the IEC Memorandum and the International Conference, the ICL cadres and youth members undertook an internationally directed education program on Trotsky's fight to forge the Fourth International. The period roughly from the bureaucratic degeneration of the Soviet Union (1924) through the struggle against fascism in Germany, the French Popular Front of the 1930s and the Spanish Civil War is rich with lessons on Trotsky's struggle to cohere an international revolutionary proletarian vanguard under generally unfavorable conditions. Trotsky's ceaseless struggle against centrist adaptations to reformist and bourgeois forces, including by sections adhering to the Trotskyist International Left Opposition, is a valuable guide for the ICL today in our fight for new October Revolutions.

Faction Fight in the French Section

The International Conference came on the heels of our having successfully rebuffed a political challenge to the essence of our existence: the core premise of Marxism that the role of the revolutionary party is to bring into the working class the revolutionary class consciousness necessary to overthrow capitalism. A factional struggle took place in the ICL's French section (Ligue Trotskyste de France [LTF]) in the crucible of the first significant class struggle against the new popular-front government (see *Le Bolchévik* No. 145, "La lutte pour une section française de la LCI dans le monde post-soviétique" ["The Fight for a French ICL Section in the Post-Soviet World"]). In the midst of the truckers strike last November, two then-members of the LTF, Djura and Zakaria, went into opposition to directives from the International Secretariat to mobilize the entire LTF and youth organization to go to the truckers' barricades and present ourselves to the strikers through our Marxist press as the *only* left group in France which did not vote for the racist strikebreaking Jospin/Gayssot popular-front government.

Under camouflage of sloganeering for more militant strike tactics, Djura and Zakaria negated the need to forge a revolutionary leadership, thereby reinforcing illusions in the existing union misleaders and the bourgeois workers parties of the capitalist popular-front government which chains the proletariat to its exploiters. Soon thereafter, Djura and Zakaria emerged as the "Permanent Revolution Faction," with a 35-page document. The kilogram weight alone of the document was the unmistakable imprint of the windbag Jan Norden, leader of the "Internationalist Group" (IG), and indeed the minority declared its solidarity with every known political position of the IG, especially the glorification of the existing consciousness of the proletariat, thereby, like Michel Pablo before them, rendering the revolutionary party superfluous. (For background on the IG, see "Pabloism of the Second Mobilization—A Shamefaced Defection from Trotskyism," *Workers Vanguard* No. 648, 5 July 1996.)

Uniquely on the left, the ICL's organizational rules codify the right to organized internal factional struggle—a reflection of lessons learned through our origins as the Revolutionary Tendency which fought the bureaucratic and political degeneration of the American Socialist Workers Party. The point was made repeatedly to the French minority that they could fight either as disciplined members with full factional rights from inside the party, or fight from outside—but they couldn't do both simultaneously, enjoying the rights of membership while flouting the responsibilities. Our organizational rules clearly stipulate that contact with opponent political organizations must be carried out under the direction



In this challenging period, the ICL seeks opportunities to intervene on our full revolutionary program. Special supplement issued by the ICL's U.S. section during 1997 UPS strike explained the nature of the capitalist state and exposed the role of its "labor lieutenants." We called for a labor-led fight against racist oppression and fascists and for a workers government to expropriate the bourgeoisie.



Kuntz/Reuters

of the relevant party body. Although it was evident that the "Permanent Revolution Faction" was controlled by the IG, we chose not to take organizational measures earlier for our own reasons: to fully thrash out the political issues in dispute in order to strengthen the French section and the international.

Our party has not been immune to the pressures bearing down on the entire left in the post-Soviet period. Internal political struggle in defense of Marxism is the means whereby a revolutionary party can maintain its programmatic integrity against the disintegrative pressures of bourgeois society. Thus this internal challenge was seized upon as an opportunity to programmatically steel the LTF against the pressures of popular-frontism and national narrowness which the "Permanent Revolution Faction" so grossly imbibed. The minority's factional rights were scrupulously upheld, indeed the International Secretariat (I.S.) even offered them the opportunity to tour other ICL sections to seek cothinkers—an offer they declined (and indeed they found *not one* supporter anywhere in the ICL, although every one of their documents was translated and circulated to all sections by the I.S.). The issues in dispute were thoroughly debated and voted on in the LTF, including at a national conference. The minority was subsequently expelled for refusal to meet with a duly constituted party control commission to investigate the minority's breach of discipline, i.e., unauthorized contact with the Internationalist Group.

The Third International Conference of the ICL passed a motion endorsing the LTF's expulsion of the "Permanent Revolution Faction":

"We note the immediate protest on the Internet by supporters of the Internationalist Group serves as confirmation of the organizational collaboration between the erstwhile French minority and the IG.

"The documents of the LTF majority and majority motions passed at the LTF's 17th National Conference document the Permanent Revolution Faction's flight from revolutionary Trotskyism to which their organizational disloyalty was a corollary. The Permanent Revolution Faction's misidentification of working-class combativity with revolutionary consciousness negated the need for a revolutionary party. This was the Permanent Revolution Faction's bridge to the Jospin popular front and to the Internationalist Group. As a caricature of the LTF's most rotten impulses and accommodation to alien political

forces, the faction served to illuminate the LTF's longstanding disorientation and accommodation to the PCF wing of the popular front. This glorification of French national chauvinist traditions is the rotten legacy of the French Trotskyist movement's Pabloite liquidation and capitulation to the Popular Front—a history which the French section of the ICL stands in opposition to. The factional struggle served as a useful device to politically and organizationally cohere a French section. The test now for the LTF is to turn outward, intervene against our opponents with our revolutionary program and recruit."

A special LTF Commission at the International Conference addressed the perspectives and tasks of the LTF in the aftermath of this intense faction fight. The transformation of the ICL's French section through this struggle—the emergence of young cadre taking the lead, avidly studying Lenin and Trotsky and Cannon, working collectively in sharp contrast to the "star" traditions of French Pabloism, and finally a broadening of horizons beyond the French "Hexagon" to intervene in the work of ICL sections elsewhere—was such a dramatic turn for the better that one comrade wryly suggested the IG continue to help forge the ICL by planting agents in other troubled sections!

Leninist Struggle Against Fake-Left Obstacles

The clearest measure of a revolutionary party is its attitude toward its centrist and reformist opponents. Thus a report on our political opponents was given at the International Conference. Combatting opponents derives from the Marxist premise that the false consciousness of the proletariat can and must be changed to a higher class consciousness of its revolutionary tasks. This means combatting reformist illusions that tie the working class to its own bourgeoisie. The centrists are more dangerous because they couch their accommodation to the reformists, and therefore to the existing capitalist order, in pseudo-revolutionary rhetoric. Therefore, the logic of avoiding political combat with centrists is to abandon the struggle for a revolutionary perspective; it means becoming the left tail of parliamentary electoralist reformism.

With the demise of the Soviet Union, and the overt disavowal of socialist ideals by the previously hegemonic mass reformist parties of the working class, the capitalist rulers

are pushing through draconian attacks on social assistance and driving to increase the rate of exploitation domestically to become more competitive with rival imperialist bourgeoisies. In this context, self-described Trotskyist organizations—from Workers Power to Lutte Ouvrière to the Cliffite tendency (headed by the British Socialist Workers Party; the Cliffites in North America are known as the International Socialists)—are openly advocating a “butter not guns” reformist menu and campaigning for the mass reformist parties who don’t even promise reforms, but push ruthless attacks on the working class. The timeworn “excuse” for such sellout politics is “lesser evilism”: unite to “fight the right”—a line which resonates especially in Europe today with the alarming growth of the fascists. Meanwhile, by dismantling the workers’ gains and leading the attacks on immigrants and minorities, the reformists abetted by their centrist tails are *paving the way for the fascists*. This is why Leon Trotsky called the popular front *not a tactic but the greatest crime*.

Emblematic of the rightward lunge of the fake left and their despairing “perspectives” is the “United Secretariat of the Fourth International” (USec) of the late Ernest Mandel. Formerly wild-eyed enthusiasts for Third World Stalinism and nationalism and petty-bourgeois radicalism, the USec enlisted in the bourgeoisie’s anti-Soviet crusade in the 1980s over Afghanistan and Polish Solidarność, in tandem with the Cold Warriors of mainstream social democracy. They thus participated, insofar as they were able, in the undoing of the October Revolution.

Born in the 1950s as apologists for the Stalinist bureaucracies, the Pabloists opposed the program of fighting for Trotskyist parties, claiming that “objective” forces could compel Stalinists to behave as revolutionaries. During the Vietnam War, the USec went so far as to proclaim that the progress of world revolution had become “irreversible.” Now that the Stalinists have led the USSR and East Europe straight to counterrevolution, today’s Pabloites are reduced to a program of outright and utter despair.

The centrists of Workers Power so deeply imbibe the “death of communism” lie of the imperialist bourgeoisie that they have finally brought their “theory” into line with their practice of backing every anti-Soviet provocation by imperialism, by declaring that the state in the former Soviet Union has been bourgeois since at least 1927. Thus they return to the social-democratic “Third Camp,” having split in 1980 from the Cliffites without ever really breaking from the politics of “Neither Washington nor Moscow”—a fiction to conceal reconciliation with one’s “own” imperialism.

The contradictions for the reformist Cliffites, who seek to fill the void left by the former Stalinist parties, are exquisite. They recruit large numbers of youth by pledging to be a socialist alternative to the mass reformist parties. Meanwhile, they always campaign for the British Labour Party and declared themselves “over the moon” for the election of Tony Blair’s “New Labour.” This baffled many of their own supporters, as Blair then set out to do exactly what he said he would: slash and burn public assistance, wages, pensions, education, seek to break Labour’s ties to the trade unions, and step up bloody British imperialist provocations from Ireland to Iraq. In Germany, the Cliffites are buried inside the Social Democracy (SPD), simultaneously posing as anti-racist fighters while stumping for the SPD, which is running the most racist election campaigns seen in Germany in decades! It is this enormous contradiction between the Cliff-

ites’ leftist pretensions and their craven service in polishing the “democratic” credentials of imperialism which the ICL must exploit to win leftist youth and workers to the banner of genuine communism.

The *apparent* strengthening of reformism at the electoral level, as popular-front capitalist governments have been brought to power across Europe and Labour has taken the reins for capital in Britain, is belied by a fundamental contradiction: the reformist parties can’t deliver any reforms to their base anymore. Their role at the helm of governmental power is to dismantle the “welfare state” which was the capitalist rulers’ acknowledgment that they had to make significant concessions to their own restive working classes after World War II, when the expansion of Soviet military power to East Europe seemed to bring closer the “spectre of communism” the bourgeoisies had dreaded since 1917. Thus there is an important opening for the ICL to combat parliamentary reformism and its centrist apologists among the most conscious workers and radicalized intellectuals, provided we actively intervene in social struggles on the basis of our revolutionary program. Unlike our centrist and reformist opponents, our struggle is not for maintenance of the status quo, mere reforms within the capitalist framework, but for nothing less than the creation of a revolutionary, egalitarian socialist society which can only be achieved by the proletarian seizure of power and international socialist economic planning.

Centrist groups which originated as right-wing defections from the ICL are willing to pay a particular price to get into the popular-front milieu, and the ticket is to dish up as much venom and lies as possible about the ICL. Thus we have the spectacle of Bill Logan’s Stalinophobic Bolshevik Tendency (BT) unabashedly drooling over Norden’s Stalinophilic Internationalist Group on the basis of classic ex-communist lies of an allegedly bureaucratic “regime” which bruised their swollen egos (see the BT’s “Willful Blindness,” 1917 No. 20, 1998).

Trotsky noted in *Lessons of October* that every sharp turn in the world situation provokes disorientation in the leadership of the revolutionary party. The BT and the IG represent the trickle away from Trotskyism one would have expected at the key political junctures of the last political period. At the onset of Cold War II in the 1980s, when the American bourgeoisie led prevailing public opinion to regard the Soviet Union as the “evil empire,” individuals who quit the ICL under the pressure of the period, and some who were expelled for crimes against the party or proletariat, formed the BT...while claiming to stand on the revolutionary program and heritage of the Spartacist League. With the collapse of the Soviet Union and the deformed workers states of East Europe in the early 1990s, four individuals who became the Norden group engineered their own expulsions from the ICL...while claiming to stand on our revolutionary traditions and heritage. Neither the individuals who became the BT nor the Nordenite grouping inside the ICL made any fight as a declared faction because their leaders are typical centrists—short-sighted political cowards lacking any perspective except the appetite to capitulate to “larger” forces.

With the Russian question considered passé in the reformist swamps in which the IG and BT slither, they have repudiated a whole range of positions which are key to the revolutionary program of Trotskyism. While Norden’s IG covers for their Brazilian affiliate’s class treason of suing unions in the bourgeois courts, members of Logan’s BT

cross picket lines in New York City. Having abandoned the Trotskyist program and a proletarian compass, these renegades are capable of exiting the workers movement entirely. Indeed, a founding member of the IG was expelled from the ICL as unfit for membership in a revolutionary organization (her current comrades voted for her expulsion!) for stating that criminals get more justice in the bourgeois courts than she did in the revolutionary party! A more unprincipled lash-up would be hard to find.

Other pretenders to Trotskyism have bought the "death of communism" lie hook, line and sinker and are busily "regrouping" with anyone they can feather a common nest with, however briefly, in pursuit of temporary positions of advantage, with any pretense to Marxist principle thrown out the window (see "Revolutionary Regroupment or Centrist Alchemy?" *Spartacist* [English edition] No. 53, Summer 1997). We pursue polemics with other currents in the workers movement precisely because we believe it is through the open clash of opinion and political debate that political differences are clarified and consciousness is raised above the lowest common denominator pushed by the reformists and centrists.

It is precisely through such sharp political struggle that we will build the ICL through genuine revolutionary regroupment with leftward-moving currents. And it is also through well-prepared *splits* and the rupture of false unity that obstacles are cleared and the road is opened for building the revolutionary party. Thus, for instance, the task of building authentic Trotskyist parties in Latin America was furthered when, after a sufficient period of testing, the ICL broke fraternal relations with a Brazilian group whose ingrained trade-union opportunism led them to class treason...and to the Internationalist Group (see "A Break in Fraternal Relations with Luta Metalúrgica," *WV* No. 648, 5 July 1996). We will continue to energetically pursue opportunities for geographic extension through testing in struggle apparent programmatic agreement between the ICL and

leftward-moving formations. A party must be judged not just by its words but its deeds; the truth is often difficult to discern from a distance.

The task before ICL sections, to become more deeply rooted *fighting propaganda groups*, requires the ability to generate effective polemics and propaganda that intersect current struggles. Such polemics should reflect our own participation in those struggles and our leaflets and articles must be addressed to the vanguard of militants whose consciousness will change throughout those struggles. Consciousness also varies from generation to generation and from one country to another. Key programmatic documents of our tendency, such as the SL/U.S. document on the black freedom struggle, "Black and Red" (see *Marxist Bulletin* No. 5 [Revised], "For the Materialist Conception of the Negro Question"), were not the result of somebody sitting in an office writing, but reflected our comrades' participation in sit-ins and demonstrations, arguing revolutionary politics with other militants in living struggles. Active intervention with our program will generate the propaganda we need to win the vanguard of intellectuals, workers and oppressed to our ranks.

Proletarianization and Permanent Revolution

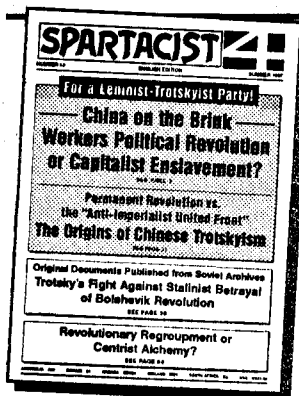
A central theme of the Third International Conference was the need for ICL sections to sink roots where they are and acquire a base of support in key sectors of the proletariat through building communist fractions in industry; equally, the ICL must seek to make calculated extensions internationally where there is proletarian vitality and accessibility.

Notably, when the SL/U.S. acquired sufficient forces in the early 1970s, we did deliberately and successfully build proletarian footholds here and there in key industries such as steel and auto. Our industrial concentrations largely disappeared as a result of the wrenching workings of the global capitalist marketplace: masses are laid off through firings and plant closings, as capital investment shifts to cheaper

SPARTACIST

An Organ of
Revolutionary Marxism

Spartacist, the theoretical and documentary repository of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist), is published under the direction of the International Executive Committee in four languages. *Spartacist* is included in all subscriptions to the ICL's press in the English, French, German and Spanish languages.



English edition No. 53
(56 pages) US \$1.50



Edition française n° 31
(64 pages) 10FF



Deutsche Ausgabe Nr. 19
(64 Seiten) DM 3,—



Edition en español No. 28
(64 páginas) US \$1

Back issues available. Order from/pay to: Spartacist Publishing Co., Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116, USA



Reuters



AP

Protests in South Korea (left) and Indonesia against imperialist-imposed IMF austerity. Rapid industrialization in Asia and elsewhere has created a young and militant proletariat. The program of permanent revolution is the road to national and social emancipation in the colonial and semicolonial countries.

labor markets offering a higher rate of exploitation. Today tobacco fields in the non-union "open shop" states of the Old South are dotted with auto plants, not easily accessible to a small communist organization based in urban centers. Elsewhere, intensive capital investment in Latin America and especially Asia has transformed hitherto unlikely locales for major conflicts of labor vs. capital into potential proletarian powder kegs.

No matter how embryonic, each section of the ICL must seek to make *concrete* our proletarian orientation. The International Conference discussed the history of the Trotskyist movement in this light. The Bolsheviks before the Russian Revolution had a strong base in the Petrograd metal industries, in Moscow-area textile mills, and in the Baku oil fields and refineries. Up until World War II, the Trotskyists had crucial bases in the Belgian coal mines. The big breakthrough for the American Trotskyists came among the Minneapolis Teamsters where some comrades, including an unemployed college graduate named Farrell Dobbs, managed to get jobs and when the opportunity came to organize and fight, they led three major strikes in one year, including a general strike, in that city.

The Cannon wing's proletarian orientation made the SWP what it was. If you run the tapes of history back again without this component, it is unlikely that there would have been any continuity of revolutionary Trotskyism in America. A party composed of Shachtman's intellectuals would have earlier gone the way Shachtman eventually did—fleeing from Trotskyist unconditional military defense of the Soviet Union, and, as there is no "Third Camp," sliding into the camp of his own bourgeoisie (Shachtman ultimately even supported the CIA's Bay of Pigs invasion of the Cuban deformed workers state).

As revolutionary proletarian *internationalists*, the ICL's perspective is not limited to the national sections which we currently struggle to root in social reality and extend. There are objectively ripe conditions for revolution in many areas of the globe. The challenge for the ICL is to endeavor to make geographic extensions through the acquisition of able cadre, perhaps first from among immigrants where we are, to

place the ICL in a position to be the necessary revolutionary subjective factor in the coming upheavals.

Like all opportunities, openings for the development of new ICL sections are transient. If, for instance, we already had a communist presence in industry in hot spots of Southeast Asia, and recruits among the declassed intelligentsia, and fused them together as a Bolshevik leadership as Lenin teaches in *What Is To Be Done?*, then we could be in a position today to lead a proletarian opposition to the austerity imposed by the International Monetary Fund. Capitalism has created its own gravediggers in these countries of jagged, belated, "combined and uneven" development, where the Trotskyist program of permanent revolution powerfully applies: there will be no emancipation for the oppressed or achievement of even basic democratic rights short of a proletarian seizure of power and international extension of the revolution. But the objectively powerful proletariat will not emerge by itself as the gravedigger of capitalism. The crucial factor is *revolutionary leadership cohered in a Leninist combat party*. In the absence of that, seething proletarian and plebeian discontents are deflected by the ruling class into nationalism or inter-ethnic rivalries (such as the pogroms against the ethnic Chinese in Indonesia today).

In seeking to position the ICL to be the revolutionary factor in struggles internationally, it is important to appreciate that in this epoch of imperialist decay, the world is not a uniform list of countries from A to Z; rather, national particularities are an enormous factor which must be understood to apply the Marxist lever to any given society. Moreover, the dynamic of world socialist revolution is *dialectical*. To take Mexico as one example, the future course of the Mexican proletarian revolution depends *a lot* on whether that revolution takes place aided by a red Soviet America or faces a hostile imperialist colossus to its north. There is no divine plan that the red flag will fly over Mexico City before it flies over New York City, or over Seoul before it flies over Tokyo.

The interlinked questions of imperialism and the Trotskyist program of permanent revolution were the focus of special conference sessions and educational. (Comrade Seymour's

educational at the International Conference is reprinted in *Workers Vanguard*—see “Imperialist Rivalries Heat Up,” *WV* Nos. 686 and 687 [13 and 20 March].)

Noting that “political Islam” is increasingly a factor in hot spots of the class struggle in volatile parts of the globe, an Islamic Commission at the conference set itself the task of making concrete our program of permanent revolution, preliminarily through deepening our knowledge of various countries of the affected regions. A panel of comrades gave presentations centering on Iran, Turkey, Algeria and Indonesia, highlighting these countries’ different development in terms of the spread of Islam and the experience of imperialist colonialism.

The struggle for national independence and the creation of mass workers parties (such as Tudeh in Iran and the PKI in Indonesia) created great expectations. In many areas of the “Third World,” the masses turned to Islam as a consolation when formal independence and nationalist ideology (tailed by the Stalinists) brought no change in the fundamental conditions of their exploitation at the hands of imperialism and the dependent local ruling classes. Somewhat analogous to medieval Christianity prior to the Reformation, the Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution, Islam seeks to control every aspect of individuals’ lives. Containing within it no program for any progressive economic or social changes, Islam is an ideological expression of stagnation in these societies; hence the religious structures are fundamentally bulwarks of reaction and counterrevolution. Some themes from the rich discussion were the centrality of the struggle against women’s oppression and the defense of ethnic minorities; the development of important populations of immigrants from these regions within the imperialist countries, where immigrant workers often play a strategic role in industry and where the defense of immigrants from these regions is essential to the unity and integrity of the proletariat as a whole; and the fight against Hindu chauvinist anti-Muslim communalism in India.

The core of permanent revolution is that in the imperialist epoch, only one class—the proletariat—can lead the revolution in a socially backward country to obtain the gains of modern society which were won in the earlier epoch by bourgeois revolutions, archetypically in England and France. But in regions without a significant proletariat, the tasks of achieving democratic rights and national emancipation can only be completed as they were completed in Central Asia after the Bolshevik Revolution, that is, in closest alliance with the victorious proletarian dictatorship centered in Russia, the Ukraine and the Baku oil fields. (Present-day examples are Tibet or Afghanistan; Tibet’s fate is inextricably linked to the struggle for political revolution vs. counterrevolution in China.) In turn, the victorious proletariat is duty-bound to provide every form of material support to assist the toiling masses of backward regions in achieving their social liberation. Thus, the program of permanent revolution is based upon *proletarian centrality*.

The Question of Party Generations

Over the last few years, most sections of the ICL have launched youth organizations. From the ICL’s origins as the Revolutionary Tendency in the SWP, our organization reaffirmed and brought back into practice the earlier position of the Leninist and Trotskyist movement on youth-party relations. An ICL youth organization is not a front group; it is neither an opponent of nor a substitute for the revolutionary

party. Our youth organizations are autonomously related to the party, being organizationally independent and politically subordinate (see *SL/U.S. Marxist Bulletin* No. 7, “The Leninist Position on Youth-Party Relations”). This organizational formula serves our political aims, providing a political apprenticeship to young revolutionaries and acknowledging that each generation comes to Marxism in its own way.

While still fledgling organizations, the youth groups affiliated with ICL sections have become crucial components of the ICL, bringing a new generation of subjective revolutionaries to Trotskyism. The youth clubs motivated, argued for and helped organize a special International Conference commission on ICL youth work, which featured a presentation on the history of youth-party relations in the Marxist movement and the tasks of ICL youth groups today. This conference session hammered out an important expansion to the “Declaration of Principles and Some Elements of Program” on youth work and our revolutionary opposition to the bourgeois army and the bleak “future” as cannon fodder which imperialism offers especially minority youth today.

In recognition of the role these younger cadre are playing as *party* leaders in external work and internal party struggle, the International Conference elected a small number of candidate members to the International Executive Committee. These comrades represent more than the promise of future party leadership—they are already proven and tested in struggle in more than one ICL section or area of work.

Equally essential to the continuity of the revolutionary party is the preservation of the history of the previous generations of the Trotskyist movement, whose lessons must be learned so that the ICL can effectively serve as the collective memory of the working class. The International Conference heard reports from comrades assigned to the party’s central archive, the Prometheus Research Library, on their research in archives across America to find material on the factional struggle in the Communist League of America from 1932-33, which prefigured the definitive Cannon-Shachtman fight over the Russian question in 1939-40. This earlier fight contains within it significant implications concerning the tasks of revolutionary Marxists when in reduced circumstances, and also very strong implications concerning the centrality of a proletarian perspective and the continuity of revolutionary Marxism in our epoch.

This period also marked the transformation of Cannon into a party leader who put the struggle for political clarity and party unity on political principles above personal animosities and factionalism. This transformation came about not least through Trotsky’s direct intervention into the American section. We look forward to the publication of the documentary record which reveals the whole story of this period in the forming of an effective, cohesive communist propaganda group, which then went on to play a role as the model section for the Trotskyist movement in Trotsky’s lifetime.

The International Conference marked a qualitative political cohesion of our Leninist international which is vital in this period of heightened interimperialist rivalries and nationalism. No other tendency but the ICL can confront and surmount the historic crisis of proletarian leadership which, as Trotsky insisted, is the crisis of mankind’s future. We will not paint the task of uprooting capitalist exploitation and oppression everywhere on this planet as easier than it is, and there are no guarantees. But there is no other way. Forward to a reformed Fourth International, the indispensable world party of socialist revolution! ■

Declaration of Principles and Some Elements of Program International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist)

<p>1. World Socialist Revolution and the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist) 9</p> <p>2. The Crisis of Proletarian Leadership 9</p> <p>3. We Are the Party of the Russian Revolution 10</p> <p>4. The Theoretical and Historical Roots of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist) 14</p> <p>5. The International Character of the Socialist Revolution 16</p> <p>6. The Vanguard Role of the Working Class in the Defense of All the Oppressed 17</p>	<p>7. The Bourgeois Basis of Revisionism 18</p> <p>8. The Struggle Against Imperialist War 19</p> <p>9. The National Question and the Right of All Nations to Self-Determination 19</p> <p>10. Colonial Revolution, Permanent Revolution and the "Guerrilla Road" 20</p> <p>11. The Popular Front: Not a Tactic But the Greatest Crime 21</p> <p>12. The Revolutionary Party: Its Program, Organization, and Discipline 22</p> <p>13. We Will Intervene to Change History! 22</p>
---	---

1. World Socialist Revolution and the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist)

The International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist) is a proletarian, revolutionary and internationalist tendency which is committed to the task of building Leninist parties as national sections of a democratic-centralist international whose purpose is to lead the working class to victory through socialist revolutions throughout the world.

Only the proletariat, through the seizure of political power and the destruction of capitalism as a world system, can lay the basis for the elimination of exploitation and the resolution of the contradiction between the growth of the productive forces of the world economy and national-state barriers. Capitalism has long since outlived its progressive historical role of creating a modern industrial economy. In order to maintain their rule, the national capitalist classes must exploit national, ethnic and racial divisions, which have been intensified since the destruction of the Soviet Union. Increasingly mutually hostile imperialist powers and rival blocs must oppress the peoples of the former colonial world and those still under the yoke of colonial peonage, impoverish the world's masses, engage in continual wars for the maintenance and redivision of the world markets in order to prop up the falling rate of profit, and attempt to smash the revolutionary struggle of the workers wherever it breaks out. In its final frenzied effort to maintain its class rule, the bourgeoisie will not hesitate to plunge humanity into nuclear holocaust or dictatorial oppression of unprecedented ferocity.

On the other hand, the victory of the proletariat on a world scale would place unimagined material abundance at the service of human needs, lay the basis for the elimination of classes and the eradication of social inequality based on sex and the very abolition of the social significance of race,

nation and ethnicity. For the first time mankind will grasp the reins of history and control its own creation, society, resulting in an undreamed-of emancipation of human potential, and a monumental forward surge of civilization. Only then will it be possible to realize the free development of each individual as the condition for the free development of all. As Isaac Deutscher said in his speech, "On Socialist Man" (1966):

"We do not maintain that socialism is going to solve all predicaments of the human race. We are struggling in the first instance with the predicaments that are of man's making and that man can resolve. May I remind you that Trotsky, for instance, speaks of three basic tragedies—hunger, sex and death—besetting man. Hunger is the enemy that Marxism and the modern labour movement have taken on.... Yes, socialist man will still be pursued by sex and death; but we are convinced that he will be better equipped than we are to cope even with these."

2. The Crisis of Proletarian Leadership

The success or failure of the working class to achieve victory depends upon the organization and consciousness of the struggling masses, i.e., on *revolutionary leadership*. The revolutionary party is the indispensable weapon of the working people for their victory.

The ruling class has at its command a monopoly of the means of violence, its dominant political and bureaucratic apparatus, its enormous wealth and connections, and its control of education, the mass media and all other institutions of capitalist society. Against such a force a workers state can be brought into existence only by a proletariat fully conscious of its tasks, organized to carry them out, and determined to defend its conquests against the counterrevolutionary violence of the ruling class.

Through its acquisition of political consciousness the

working class ceases to be merely a class in itself and becomes a class *for* itself, conscious of its historic task to seize state power and reorganize society. Such consciousness is not spontaneously generated in the course of the day-to-day class struggles of the workers; it must be brought to the workers by the revolutionary party. Thus it is the task of the revolutionary party to forge the proletariat into a sufficient political force by infusing it with a consciousness of its real situation, educating it in the historical lessons of the class struggle, tempering it in ever deepening struggles, destroying its illusions, steeling its revolutionary will and self-confidence, and organizing the overthrow of all forces standing in the way of the conquest of power. A conscious working class is the decisive force in history.

The indispensable nature of the task of forging a vanguard party and honing its revolutionary edge in preparation for the inevitable revolutionary crises is underscored in the imperialist epoch. As Trotsky pointed out in *The Third International After Lenin* (1928):

"The revolutionary character of the epoch does not lie in that it permits of the accomplishment of the revolution, that is, the seizure of power at every given moment. Its revolutionary character consists in profound and sharp fluctuations and abrupt and frequent transitions from an immediately revolutionary situation.... This is the sole source from which flows the full significance of revolutionary strategy in contradistinction to tactics. Thence also flows the new significance of the party and the party leadership.... [Today] every new sharp change in the political situation to the Left places the decision in the hands of the revolutionary party. Should it miss the critical situation, the latter veers around to its opposite. Under these circumstances the role of the party leadership acquires exceptional importance. The words of Lenin to the effect that two or three days can decide the fate of the international revolution would have been almost incomprehensible in the epoch of the Second International. In our epoch, on the contrary, these words have only too often been confirmed and, with the exception of the October, always from the negative side."

3. We Are the Party of the Russian Revolution

The October 1917 Russian Revolution took the Marxist doctrine of proletarian revolution out of the realm of theory and gave it reality, creating a society where those who labored ruled through the dictatorship of the proletariat. This proletarian revolution led by the Bolshevik Party in Russia was not made solely *for* Russia. For revolutionary Marxists, the Russian Revolution was seen as the opening shot of a necessarily international struggle of labor against the rule of capital worldwide. Lenin's Bolsheviks broke the capitalist chain at its weakest link, understanding that unless the proletarian revolution was extended to the major capitalist powers, most immediately Germany, an isolated dictatorship of the proletariat in Russia could not long survive.

The opportunities were manifold, but the new revolutionary parties outside Russia were too new, that is, too weak and politically immature, to pursue them. In Europe, especially Germany, the Social Democracy served its bourgeois masters, helping restabilize their order and joining with them in hostility to the October Revolution. Elsewhere, in less developed nations and regions, the main ideological obstacle and force against Bolshevism was nationalism.

The pressure of imperialist encirclement, the devastation of the Russian working class in the Civil War and the lengthy isolation of the Russian Revolution enabled a

bureaucratic layer headed by Stalin to usurp political power in a political counterrevolution in 1923-24, what Trotsky called the "Soviet Thermidor." While resting on and deriving its privileges from proletarian property forms of the Soviet degenerated workers state, the Stalinist bureaucracy was not irrevocably committed to their defense. Stalin's "theory" of "socialism in one country," expressing the nationally limited interests of the Kremlin bureaucracy, turned the Communist International from an instrument of the world revolution into a new obstacle.

Stalin's "socialism in one country" was a rejection of the fundamental principles of Marxism. *The Communist Manifesto* (1848) concludes, "Workingmen of all countries, unite!" The Revolutions of 1848 signaled the opening of the modern era—the bourgeoisie made common cause with reaction in the face of a proletariat already perceived as threatening to capitalist rule. As Engels wrote in his "Principles of Communism" (1847):

"*Question 19:* Will it be possible for this revolution to take place in one country alone?"

"*Answer:* No. Large-scale industry, already by creating the world market, has so linked up all the peoples of the earth, and especially the civilised peoples, that each people is dependent on what happens to another. Further, in all civilised countries large-scale industry has so levelled social development that in all these countries the bourgeoisie and the proletariat have become the two decisive classes of society and the struggle between them the main struggle of the day. The communist revolution will therefore be no merely national one.... It is a worldwide revolution and will therefore be worldwide in scope."

In opposition to Stalin's nationalist opportunism, Trotsky's Left Opposition was founded on the program of authentic Marxism which animated the Bolshevik Revolution. The Left Opposition fought to preserve and extend the gains of the Russian Revolution which had been betrayed but not yet overthrown. In his searing analysis of the degeneration of the Russian Revolution, the dual nature of the Stalinist bureaucracy, and the explosive contradictions of Soviet society (*The Revolution Betrayed*, 1936) Trotsky posed the choice starkly: "Will the bureaucrat devour the workers' state, or will the working class clean up the bureaucrat?" Trotsky's prophetic warning was vindicated, bitterly, in the negative.

The anti-internationalist doctrine of "socialism in one country" resulted in a disastrous careening from ultraleft adventures to class collaboration. Trotsky characterized Stalin as the "gravedigger" of revolutionary struggles abroad, from the second Chinese Revolution in 1925-27 and the British General Strike of 1926 to Germany, where the CP, as well as the Social Democrats, allowed Hitler to come to power without firing a shot. In the context of the German betrayal, and the Comintern's subsequent codification of the explicitly anti-revolutionary line of building popular fronts, which found its fullest expression in the Stalinists' criminal strangulation of the Spanish Revolution, the Trotskyists organized the Fourth International, which was founded in 1938.

The planned economy in the Soviet Union (and the bureaucratically deformed workers states which elsewhere later arose on the Stalinist model) proved its superiority over capitalist anarchy in the period of rapid development. But the relentless pressure of continuing economic encirclement by the still world-dominant capitalist mode of production through the world market was inexorable without international extension of the revolution. Trotsky wrote in *The Revolution Betrayed*:

"The question formulated by Lenin—*Who shall prevail?*—is a question of the correlation of forces between the Soviet



V. I. Lenin and Leon Trotsky among a group of delegates to First Congress of the Communist International, March 1919, in Moscow.

Union and the world revolutionary proletariat on the one hand, and on the other international capital and the hostile forces within the [Soviet] Union.... Military intervention is a danger. The intervention of cheap goods in the baggage trains of a capitalist army would be an incomparably greater one."

The Fourth International's organizational weakness, lack of deep roots in the proletariat, and theoretical incapacity and disorientation after WWII contributed heavily to the political break in continuity with the program of Trotsky's Fourth International. The prior decimation of Trotskyist cadres throughout Europe at the hands of fascist and Stalinist repression—and the massacres of Trotskyists in Vietnam and jailing of Trotskyists in China, countries where the Left Opposition had found significant bases of support—gutted the movement of experienced cadres at a crucial moment.

The expansion of Stalinist rule in Eastern Europe after the war posed a new programmatic challenge to the Trotskyist movement against which formal "orthodoxy" was an insufficient defense. After an uninterrupted string of defeats and betrayals, from China (1927) and Germany (1933) to the Spanish Civil War, and Stalin's murderous purges, the existence of the Soviet Union had been placed in grave danger. The Red Army defeated Hitler *despite Stalin* who—after beheading the Soviet military through his bloody purges on the eve of World War II—further sabotaged the military defense of the Soviet Union through his faith first in Hitler and then in the "democratic" allies.

Yet the Red Army's victory over fascism greatly enhanced the authority of the bureaucratically degenerated Soviet Union, an eventuality not foreseen by Trotsky. The West European Stalinists emerged from WWII at the head of the mass organizations of militant workers of Italy, France, and elsewhere. Meanwhile, in Soviet-occupied East Europe, capitalist property was expropriated and a collectivized economy established through a bureaucratically controlled social revolution, producing deformed workers states modeled on the Stalinist-ruled USSR.

Conditioned in part by the Vietnam War and internal turmoil racking the U.S., not least the black liberation struggle,

the late 1960s/early 1970s saw a series of prerevolutionary and revolutionary situations in Europe—France 1968, Italy 1969, Portugal 1974-75. These represented the best opportunities for proletarian revolution in the advanced capitalist countries since the immediate post-World War II period. It was the pro-Moscow Communist Parties which again managed to preserve the shaken bourgeois order in this region. Here the counterrevolutionary role of the Western Stalinist parties contributed immeasurably to the subsequent destruction of the Soviet Union. The restabilization of the bourgeois order in the Western imperialist states in the mid-1970s was immediately followed by a new Cold War offensive against the Soviet bloc.

The Soviet Stalinist bureaucracy—in the absence of the proletariat as a contender for power—had sooner or later to turn to "market socialism," which, along with appeasement of U.S. imperialism in Afghanistan and brokering capitalist restoration throughout East Europe, opened wide the floodgates to capitalist counterrevolution in the former Soviet Union in 1991-92. The proletariat, leaderless, did not resist, spelling the destruction of the workers state.

The 1979 "Iranian Revolution" opened up a period of ascendant political Islam in the historically Muslim world, a development which contributed to and was powerfully reinforced by the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union. Khomeini's seizure and consolidation of power in Iran was a defeat akin to Hitler's crushing of the German proletariat in 1933, albeit on a narrower, regional scale. The international Spartacist tendency's slogan "Down with the Shah! No support to the mullahs!" and our focus on the woman question ("No to the veil!") stood in sharp opposition to the rest of the left's capitulation to mullah-led reaction.

The preservation of proletarian power depends principally on the political *consciousness* and *organization* of the working class. After the physical liquidation of the revolutionary wing of the Bolsheviks by Stalin, all continuity with the traditions of the October Revolution was systematically



Der Spiegel

expunged from the memory of the working class. In Soviet mass consciousness, suffused with the Russian-nationalist propaganda churned out by Stalin, World War II came to supplant the October Revolution as the epochal event in Soviet history. In the end, Stalin and his heirs succeeded in imprinting their nationalist outlook on the Soviet peoples; proletarian internationalism came to be sneered at as an obscure "Trotskyite heresy" of "export of revolution" or else cynically emptied of content.

Atomized and bereft of any anti-capitalist leadership, lacking any coherent and consistent socialist class consciousness, and skeptical about the possibility of class struggle in the capitalist countries, the Soviet working class did not rally in resistance against the encroaching capitalist counterrevolution. And, as Trotsky noted in *The Third International After Lenin*: "If an army capitulates to the enemy in a critical situation without a battle, then this capitulation completely takes the place of a 'decisive battle,' in politics as in war."

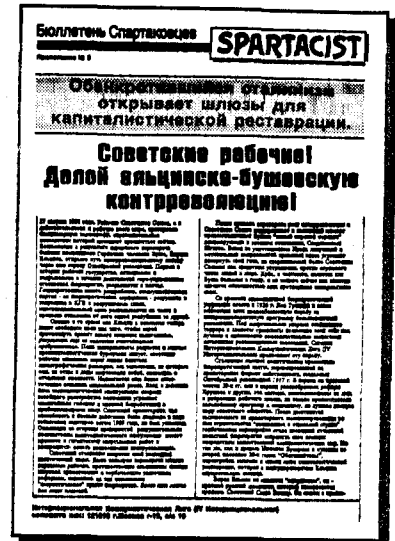
An analysis of the terminal crisis of Stalinism is provided in *Spartacist* No. 45-46, Winter 1990-91 in documents by Joseph Seymour, "On the Collapse of Stalinist Rule in East Europe," and Albert St. John, "For Marxist Clarity and a Forward Perspective," and the August 1993 Spartacist Pamphlet, *How the Soviet Workers State Was Strangled*. As was noted in Seymour's document:

"During his long struggle against the Stalinist bureaucracy Trotsky considered a number of *different* paths whereby capitalism might be restored in the Soviet Union.... Trotsky used the phrase 'running backwards the film of reformism' to polemicize against those professed leftists who maintained that the Stalin regime had *already* transformed the USSR into a bourgeois state through a gradual and organic process—Bernsteinism in reverse.... Trotsky's view that a capitalist counterrevolution, as well as a proletarian political revolution, in Stalin's Russia would entail civil war was a *prognosis*, not a dogma. It was predicated on resistance by the working class, not resistance by conservative elements of the bureaucratic apparatus. That is how the question is posed in *The Revolution Betrayed*.... The decisive element is the *consciousness* of the Soviet working class, which is *not static* but is affected by innumerable shifting factors domestically and internationally."

As St. John noted:

"Unlike the anarchistic bourgeois economy the planned socialist economy is not built automatically but *consciously*. Therefore, [Trotsky] writes, 'Progress towards socialism is inseparable from that state power which is desirous of socialism or which is constrained to desire it' ['The Workers State,

"Democratic" counterrevolution embraces tsarist reaction: Russian Orthodox priest blesses Yeltsin's barricades in Moscow, August 1991. ICL leaflet widely distributed in Moscow declares, "Soviet Workers: Defeat Yeltsin-Bush Counterrevolution!"



Thermidor and Bonapartism,' 1935]. Thus, he concluded, without the intervention of a conscious proletarian vanguard, the collapse of the Stalinist political regime would lead inevitably to the liquidation of the planned economy and to restoration of private property."

The "Russian question" has been the defining political question of the 20th century and the touchstone for revolutionaries. We Trotskyists stayed at our posts and fought to preserve and extend the revolutionary gains of the working class while every other tendency on the planet capitulated to the ideological pressure of imperialist anti-communism. Above all our defense of the USSR was expressed in our fight for new October Revolutions around the world.

Responsibility for the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union lies also with all manner of reformists and centrists who lined up behind their own capitalist rulers against the USSR, including backing every reactionary movement from Polish Solidarność to the Islamic fundamentalist butchers in Afghanistan. The devastating and worldwide consequences of the Soviet counterrevolution also destroy on the theoretical level the anti-Marxist theories that the Stalinist bureaucracy was "state capitalist," according to which the Soviet counterrevolution would have been merely a shift from one form of capitalism to another.

The ascendancy of Boris Yeltsin and capitalist-restorationist forces in August 1991 was a pivotal event in determining the fate of the Soviet Union, but the final undoing of the October Revolution was not a foregone conclusion. Spartacists distributed throughout the Soviet Union over 100,000 copies in Russian of our August 1991 article, "Soviet Workers: Defeat Yeltsin-Bush Counterrevolution!" There we wrote that workers mobilizations should have cleaned out the counterrevolutionary rabble on Yeltsin's barricades, thus opening the road to proletarian political revolution. We called for a political revolution to defeat capitalist restoration and return the Soviet proletariat to political power. Only those who were under the sway of capitalist ideology or its material perquisites were in a hurry to write off the Soviet Union at that time. The absence of resistance by a working class that had been betrayed and atomized by decades of Stalinist misrule and fierce repression was the decisive factor in the destruction of the Soviet workers state.

Our defense of the USSR was not limited to our program for the USSR: *unconditional military defense* against imperialism and internal counterrevolution; for *proletarian political*

revolution to oust the bureaucracy and return the USSR to the road of Lenin and Trotsky. It was expressed also in our unconditional military defense of the Vietnamese Revolution; in our opposition to Solidarność's drive sponsored by Wall Street and the Vatican to overturn the Polish deformed workers state; in our call to "Hail Red Army in Afghanistan—Extend social gains of the October Revolution to the Afghan peoples!"; in our active intervention for the revolutionary reunification of Germany.

History speaks its verdicts loudly. The ascendancy of counterrevolution in the former USSR is an unparalleled defeat for working people all over the world, decisively altering the political landscape on this planet. No longer challenged by Soviet military might, U.S. imperialism has proclaimed a "one-superpower world," running roughshod over semicolonial peoples from the Persian Gulf to Haiti. No longer the unrivaled economic powerhouse of world imperialism, the United States still maintains the murderous advantage of its military might, while often preferring to camouflage its terror under the "humanitarian" fig leaf of the United Nations' "den of thieves" (Lenin's description of the UN's predecessor, the League of Nations). But rival imperialisms, especially Germany and Japan, no longer constrained by anti-Soviet unity, are pursuing apace their own appetites for control of world markets and concomitantly projecting their military power. In the conflicts between rival regional trade blocs today, the outlines of future wars are sharpening. In the face of growing inter-imperialist rivalry, we reassert: "*The main enemy is at home!*"

Looking back retrospectively to the pre-World War I period, today's "post-Cold War world" presents many parallels. And with the question posed of new inter-imperialist conflict, we can expect today's reformists and centrists to act in the spirit of their social-democratic forebears of 4 August 1914 in backing their own rulers in wartime. Fully in this spirit was their support for counterrevolution in the USSR.

Alongside mass pauperization in the USSR, "ethnic cleansing" fratricide rages throughout the weak new capitalist states of East Europe and former Soviet republics where nationalist ideology substituted for non-existent capital as the motor force of counterrevolution. Often a resurgence of the pre-World War II national antagonisms in the capitalist states of this region, in the aftermath of counterrevolution, nationalist ideology again becomes the chief roadblock which revolutionaries have to smash through.

In West Europe the safety net of social welfare measures is slashed as the bourgeoisies no longer see any need to stave off the "spectre of communism" by providing necessities. While the ideological climate of the "death of communism" affects the consciousness of the proletariat, in many countries of the world sharp class struggle provides the objective basis for the regeneration of Marxism as the theory of scientific socialism and proletarian revolution. It is not communism, but its parody, Stalinism, which has been shown to be a dead end.

Victorious counterrevolution has not only devastated the ex-Soviet and East European proletariats materially and ideologically; in a whole series of countries (e.g., Italy, France) where Communist Parties commanded the allegiance of advanced layers of the working class, the proletariat has been sold the lie that "socialism has failed," promoted by the ruling Stalinist bureaucracies who had headed these deformed workers states and presided over their destruction. The Kremlin abetted by the East German Sta-



Reuters

Beijing's Tiananmen Square, May 1989: Chinese workers defended student protesters, opposed Deng's pro-capitalist "reforms." When working people entered the protests en masse, Stalinist regime trembled.

linists led the counterrevolution in the DDR, rushing to hand the country over to the Fourth Reich. The Kremlin bureaucracy under Gorbachev carried out its ultimate, terminal betrayal, declaring that socialism had been a doomed utopian experiment and proclaiming the superiority of the capitalist market system. The disintegrating CPSU spawned openly counterrevolutionary gangs led by Boris Yeltsin who acted as the open agent of U.S. imperialism in the restoration of capitalism. Hence the Stalinist ruling castes and their cothinkers in the West bear direct responsibility for the destruction of the socialist aspirations of the advanced proletarian layers in Western Europe and elsewhere.

Trotsky's assertion in the 1938 Transitional Program that "The world political situation as a whole is chiefly characterized by a historical crisis of the leadership of the proletariat" predates the present deep regression of proletarian consciousness. The reality of this post-Soviet period adds a new dimension to Trotsky's observation. The only way in which this regression can be overcome and the working class can become a class *for* itself, i.e., fighting for socialist revolution, is to reforge an international Leninist-Trotskyist party as the leadership of the working class. Marxism must once again win the allegiance of the proletariat.

In China, the extreme nationalist ideology pushed by the ruling Stalinist bureaucracy is a direct bridge to capitalist restoration. The essence of "market reforms" counterrevolution in China is the bureaucracy seeking to become partners in exploitation with capitalist forces and especially the Chinese capitalists who were not destroyed as a class (as were their Russian counterparts after October 1917) but continued

to function in Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore and elsewhere. China has carved out "special economic zones" as islands of imperialist exploitation and keeps the reverted Hong Kong's capitalist economy untouched, while the army and bureaucracy generally are engaged in large-scale business ventures. Now the bureaucracy, sections of which seek to become the new capitalist exploiters, looks toward wholesale destruction of state industry, thereby posing the dismantling of what remains of the planned economy of the deformed workers state.

This course cannot be accomplished without breaking the resistance of the militant working class. The ruling Stalinist bureaucracy showed in Tiananmen Square in 1989—an incipient political revolution—both its fear of the proletariat and its intention to rely on brute force with no trappings of "glasnost" (Soviet leader Gorbachev's political "openness"). The choices for China are *proletarian political revolution* or *capitalist counterrevolution*. The crucial factor is revolutionary leadership to reintroduce the internationalist class consciousness which animated the founding Chinese Communists of the early 1920s. The battle for workers' political revolution in China has enormous stakes for the workers internationally. The outcome will have a huge impact in the remaining deformed workers states (Cuba, Vietnam and North Korea) and also in Asian countries like Indonesia, South Korea, Thailand, Malaysia and the Philippines, where a militant young proletariat has emerged as a powerful factor.

4. The Theoretical and Historical Roots of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist)

As Trotsky described in his 1937 article, "Stalinism and Bolshevism": "Reactionary epochs like ours not only disintegrate and weaken the working class and its vanguard but also lower the general ideological level of the movement

and throw political thinking back to stages long since passed through. In these conditions, the task of the vanguard is above all not to let itself be carried along by the backward flow: it must swim against the current." In this post-Soviet period, where Marxism is widely misidentified with Stalinism, there is a revival of everything from anarchist sympathies to anti-materialist idealism and mysticism. Karl Marx explained: "*Religious* suffering is at one and the same time the *expression* of real suffering and a protest against real suffering. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world and the soul of the soulless conditions. It is the *opium* of the people. The abolition of religion as the *illusory* happiness of the people is the demand for their *real* happiness. To call on them to give up their illusions about their condition is to *call on them to give up a condition that requires illusions*" ("Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right," 1844).

The International Communist League bases itself on Marxist historical, dialectical materialism and continues the revolutionary traditions of the international working-class movement exemplified in the 1840s British Chartist movement and the Polish Party "Proletariat" (1882-86), the first workers' party in the tsarist empire. We stand on the work of revolutionists such as Marx, Engels, Lenin, Trotsky, Luxemburg, and Liebknecht. Above all we look to the experience of the Bolshevik Party which culminated in the Russian Revolution of 1917, the only revolution as yet made by the working class. This history illuminates where we come from, what we seek to defend and where we want to go.

We seek in particular to carry forward the international working-class perspectives of Marxism as developed in theory and practice by V.I. Lenin and L. D. Trotsky, as embodied in the decisions of the first four Congresses of the Communist International and by the 1938 "Transitional Program" and other key documents of the Fourth International, such as "War and the Fourth International" (1934). These materials are the indispensable documentary codification of the communist movement internationally, and are fundamental to the revolutionary tasks of our organization.

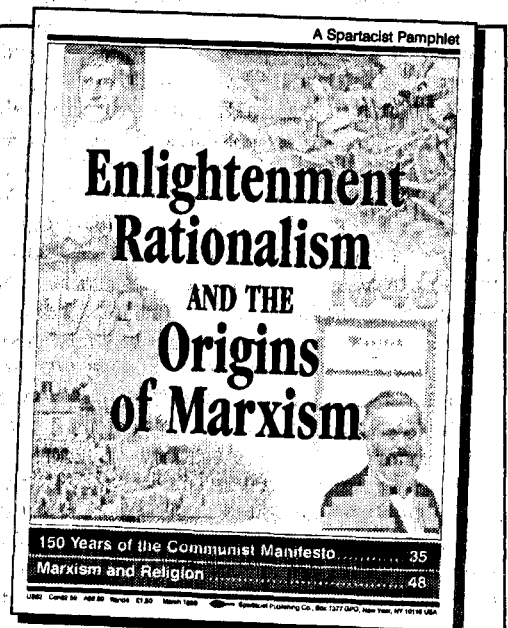
In this epoch of capitalism in advanced decay, we communists who have as our aim the proletarian conquest of state

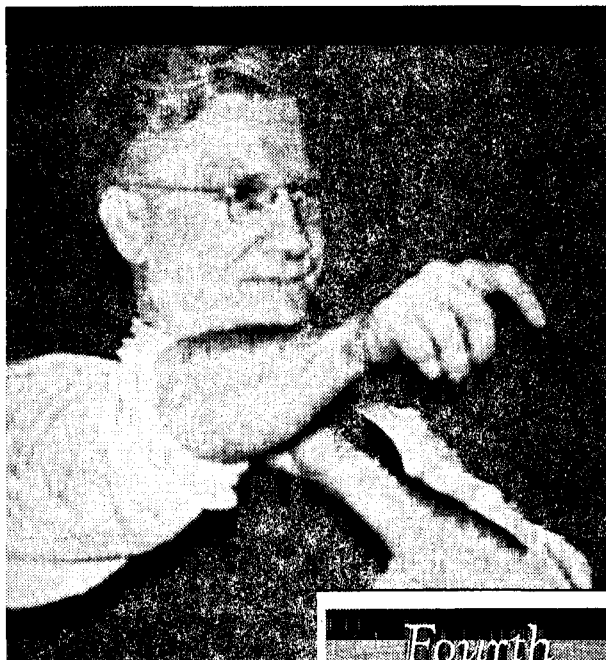
This pamphlet reprints presentations given by comrade Joseph Seymour on the origins of Marxism in the French Enlightenment and in left Hegelianism. Also included are "150 Years of the Communist Manifesto" and "Marxism and Religion."

In the retrograde climate of post-Soviet reaction, the struggle to reassert the validity of the program and purpose of revolutionary Marxism is crucial for our fight for new October Revolutions.

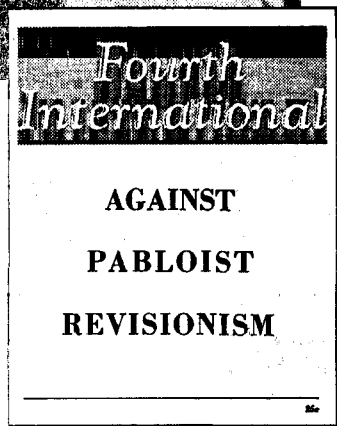
\$2 (48 pages)

Make checks payable/mail to:
Spartacist Publishing Co., Box 1377 GPO
New York, NY 10116, USA





The ICL stands on the heritage of James P. Cannon and the SWP's fight to defend the Trotskyist program against revisionism. SWP theoretical journal, *Fourth International* (September-October 1953), published SWP plenum document against Pabloism.



power and the reconstruction of society on a new egalitarian socialist basis are at the same time the most consistent defenders of the ideals of the Enlightenment and the gains of the bourgeois revolution: we are intransigent fighters for bourgeois-democratic liberties—for the right to bear arms; for the abolition of all monarchy and aristocratic privilege; for the separation of church and state; against the imposition of religious fundamentalism as a political program; for the defense of free speech and assembly against the encroachment of the bourgeois state; against barbaric "punishments" such as the death penalty; for juridical equality for women and minorities.

We are also intransigent defenders of *proletarian* rights as described in James Burnham's pamphlet, "The People's Front—The New Betrayal" (1937): "There exists under capitalist democracy, to one or another extent, a third group of rights which are not, properly speaking, 'democratic rights' at all, but rather *proletarian* rights. These are such rights as the rights to picket and to strike and to organize. The historical origin of these rights is in all cases to be found in the *independent* struggle of the proletariat *against* the bourgeoisie and the bourgeois state."

We also look for inspiration to James P. Cannon, a leader of the early American Communist Party who was won over to Trotskyism at the Sixth Congress of the Comintern and struggled to crystallize a Trotskyist formation, initially in the Communist Party, and to embed it in working-class struggle. Cannon was a principal founder of the Socialist

Workers Party (SWP). His struggle to build a proletarian party, forge a Leninist collective party leadership (rejecting the permanent factionalism of the early CP and opposing the cliquist intrigues which plagued e.g., the French Trotskyists) and the 1939-40 fight against the petty-bourgeois opposition in the SWP (Shachtman and Burnham) which defected from Trotskyism over the Russian question—this is the revolutionary heritage which the ICL upholds.

However partially and mainly on his own national terrain, Cannon fought against the Pabloist revisionist current which arose in the post-World War II Trotskyist movement. In our basic documents (see especially "Genesis of Pabloism," *Spartacist* No. 21, Fall 1972), while being sharply critical of the errors of the anti-Pabloites, we stand with them on this crucial fight for the survival of Trotskyism. Pabloism is characterized chiefly by a renunciation of the necessity for revolutionary leadership and an adaptation to existing Stalinist, social-democratic and petty-bourgeois nationalist leaderships. Following the creation of deformed workers states in East Europe, Pablo predicted "centuries of deformed workers states" and claimed that the Stalinist parties could "roughly outline a revolutionary orientation."

Ill-equipped to explain the extension of Stalinism, Cannon and the orthodox Trotskyists first sought to ward off liquidationist conclusions by denying reality (e.g., refusing to recognize China as a deformed workers state until 1955). Cannon fought against Pablo's rejection of the proletariat as the only class capable of transforming society and the denial of the need for a Trotskyist vanguard party. But this fight was never really fully carried through internationally. Denial of proletarian centrality lay behind every one of Pablo's (and later Ernest Mandel's) mainly vicarious experiments in revisionism (e.g., the "guerrilla road," students as the "new mass vanguard").

The origins of the International Communist League are in the Spartacist League/U.S. which began as the Revolutionary Tendency of the SWP and based itself primarily upon the British Socialist Labour League document, *World Prospect for Socialism* (1961), and two documents by the Revolutionary Tendency, *In Defense of a Revolutionary Perspective* (1962) and especially *Toward Rebirth of the Fourth International* (1963), the latter submitted to the SWP's 1963 Convention. At its founding conference in 1966, the Spartacist League/U.S. adopted a Declaration of Principles (see SL/U.S. *Marxist Bulletin* No. 9) which served as the model for this International Declaration of Principles. The International Communist League, by contributing to the theoretical clarification of the Marxist movement and to the reforging of the workers' necessary organizational weapons, upholds the revolutionary proletarian principles of Marxism and will carry them forward to the vanguard of the working class.

"By its very nature opportunism is nationalistic, since it rests on the local and temporary needs of the proletariat and not on its historic tasks.... International unity is not a decorative facade for us, but the very axis of our theoretical views and our policy" (Leon Trotsky, "The Defense of the Soviet Union and the Opposition," 1929). From its inception as a small handful of young Trotskyists bureaucratically expelled from the SWP, the Spartacist League's perspective and actions were directed toward the rebirth of the Fourth International and against American-centeredness.

In 1974 the *Declaration for the Organization of an International Trotskyist Tendency* was adopted, formally constituting the international Spartacist tendency. This document

sharply attacked the federated, non-Bolshevik practices of our pseudo-Trotskyist competitors, the SWP, United Secretariat and Gerry Healy's International Committee, all of whom hid behind the paper tiger of the blatantly undemocratic U.S. Voorhis Act to evade the practice of revolutionary Leninist internationalism. In contrast the iSt (forerunner to the ICL) forthrightly declared that it would be governed by the principle of international democratic-centralism.

The first delegated international conference held in 1979 elected an international executive committee. Since then the ICL has marked modest achievements in the international extension of our tendency to Latin America and South Africa and further extensions in Europe and Asia. This international growth has been a vital counterweight to the deforming pressures of our largest section existing in the protracted relatively reactionary political climate of the United States.

In 1989 the iSt became the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).

Stalinism dragged the banner of communism through the mud while systematically perverting the understanding of every basic principle and term of Marxism, and the general level of identification of human progress with the idea of communism stands at a relative low point. But the workings of capitalist imperialism generate anew a raw subjective hatred of oppression among millions across the globe. The absence of genuinely communist leadership is acutely felt by many and the program of Leninist internationalism can be put forward with great impact.

Investment by imperialists in some low-wage "Third

World" countries has created proletarian concentrations in hitherto unlikely areas for major conflicts between labor and capital. In our effort to further extend our party beyond the advanced Western countries, we seek to infuse our international with the courage of Bolsheviks like Kote Tsintsadze:

"It took altogether extraordinary conditions like czarism, illegality, prison, and deportation, many years of struggle against the Mensheviks, and especially the experience of three revolutions to produce fighters like Kote Tsintsadze... The Communist parties in the West have not yet brought up fighters of Tsintsadze's type. This is their besetting weakness, determined by historical reasons but nonetheless a weakness. The Left Opposition in the Western countries is not an exception in this respect and it must well take note of it."

— Trotsky, "At the Fresh Grave of Kote Tsintsadze,"
7 January 1931

5. The International Character of the Socialist Revolution

Historic experience has shown that the road to socialism can be opened only through the creation of dual power culminating in the destruction of the capitalist state and the victory of the workers state and development of a new social order. The police, military, bureaucratic, juridical, and political apparatus of the old order cannot be reformed to serve the proletariat's interests, but must be smashed and replaced by the dictatorship of the proletariat—a *workers government* based on councils of working people and sup-

Free Mumia Abu-Jamal! Abolish the Racist Death Penalty!

The fight to free Mumia Abu-Jamal has become *the* international symbol of the struggle against racist capitalist injustice. At the summit of the apparatus of racist repression in the United States is "legal lynching," the institutionalized barbarism of the death penalty which exposes the capitalist state's impulse to genocide. Mumia Abu-Jamal is not a nameless, faceless victim, but is linked to the living struggles of the proletariat and oppressed internationally. In no small measure this is due to the initial and ceaseless efforts of the ICL and the Partisan Defense Committee (PDC).

Over a decade ago the PDC began issuing propaganda, circulating petitions, initiating united-front protests, and motivating labor unions, celebrities, civil liberties organizations and other leftists to join the fight. We exposed the state's targeting of Mumia Abu-Jamal for death from the time he was a young leader of the Philadelphia Black Panther Party and later a supporter of the MOVE organization and an award-winning journalist known as "the voice of the voiceless." Our protests were infused with the understanding that the social power of the multiracial working class must be mobilized in Jamal's defense and organized according to the principle of non-sectarian united-front defense. We succeeded in bringing other organizations, larger and with resources beyond our own, and often with views quite hostile to our political

perspective, to take up Jamal's case.

Now our job in this phase of the struggle—as part of the crucial race against the executioner's clock and the fight for Mumia Abu-Jamal's freedom—is above all to bring to the international working class the consciousness that the way out of this whole system of capitalist injustice is the struggle for socialist revolution through the instrumentality of a Leninist party which fights as a *tribune of the people*. To act as the party which Lenin described as "able to generalise all these manifestations and produce a single picture of police violence and capitalist exploitation...in order to set forth *before all* [our] socialist convictions and [our] democratic demands, in order to clarify for *all* and everyone the world-historic significance of the struggle for the emancipation of the proletariat."

* * *

Get involved now! Contact the Partisan Defense Committee at P.O. Box 99, Canal Street Station, New York, NY 10013-0099; phone (212) 406-4252. E-mail: 75057.3201@compuserve.com.



courtesy MAJ



Basil Blackwell Inc.

Left Oppositionists in Siberian exile demonstrate on the anniversary of Bolshevik Revolution, 1928. Banner slogans are "Turn the Fire to the Right, Against Kulak, NEPman and Bureaucrat, Not in Words But In Deeds" and "Long Live the Dictatorship of the Proletariat!"

ported by the workers' armed strength. Such a state would defend itself against the counterrevolutionary efforts of the deposed ruling class to return to power and would reorganize the economy along rational lines. As the economic basis of social classes dwindles, the workers state would more and more assume a purely administrative function, finally withering away with the advent of classless communism. But to realize this aim requires the destruction of capitalist imperialism as a world system and the establishment of a world socialist division of labor.

The international character of the working class gives it a potentially enormous superiority over the bourgeoisie, as capitalism operates by anarchistic methods which set one national capitalist class against another and constantly create new unevenness and crises. In order to realize this superiority, the proletariat needs an international party to unify the class across national and other divisions and to coordinate the interdependent struggles of the workers of every country. While the revolution may begin in a single country, any partial victory will be secured only with the spread of revolution to other countries and the eventual world dominance of socialist economic organization. We fight to *reforge the Fourth International*, the world party of socialist revolution, whose program and purposes remain as valid today as at its founding in 1938.

A Leninist party is not simply built through linear recruitment, but through programmatically based splits with opportunists, as well as fusions with revolutionary elements breaking from centrism. Particularly when fusions are undertaken across national boundaries, there must be a thorough period of testing to establish solid underlying political agreement. We aim to bring together groups whose orientation is toward the achievement of new October Revolutions—nothing else, nothing other, nothing less.

6. The Vanguard Role of the Working Class in the Defense of All the Oppressed

Central to the Marxist perspective of world socialism is the vanguard role of the working class, and particularly the decisive weight of the proletariat of the industrialized countries. Only the working class has the social power and com-

pulsion of clear objective interest to liberate mankind from oppression. Having no stake in maintaining the bourgeois order, its enormous power rests in its productive role, its numbers and organization.

The continued rule of a small handful of capitalists is maintained only through keeping the working class divided and confused as to its true situation. In the United States, the ruling class succeeded in exploiting deep divisions in the proletariat, first along religious and ethnic and later along racial lines. As part of an oppressed race-color caste, the black workers are doubly oppressed and require special modes of struggle (for example, transitional organizations such as labor/black struggle leagues). The working class transcends such divisions only through struggle and highly reversibly. Socialism in the United States will be achieved only by the common struggle of black and white workers under the leadership of a multiracial revolutionary vanguard.

The U.S. black question is defined by the particular history of the United States: slavery, the Civil War defeat of the Southern slavocracy by Northern industrial capitalism and the bourgeoisie's betrayal of Radical Reconstruction's promise of equality, leading to the racist segregation of black people despite the economic integration of black toilers into the proletariat at the bottom. The forcible segregation of blacks, integral to American capitalism, has been resisted by the black masses whenever a perceived possibility for such struggle has been felt. Hence our program for the U.S. is revolutionary integrationism—the full integration of blacks into an egalitarian, *socialist* America—and our program of "black liberation through socialist revolution."

Modern capitalism, i.e., imperialism, reaching into all areas of the planet, in the course of the class struggle and as economic need demands, brings into the proletariat at its bottom new sources of cheaper labor, principally immigrants from poorer and less-developed regions of the world—workers with few rights who are deemed more disposable in times of economic contraction. Thus capitalism in ongoing fashion creates different strata among the workers, while simultaneously amalgamating the workers of many different lands. Everywhere, the capitalists, abetted by aristocracy-of-labor opportunists, try to poison class consciousness and solidarity among the workers by fomenting religious, national and ethnic divisions. The struggle for the unity and integrity of the working class against chauvinism and racism is thus a vital task for the proletarian vanguard.

Today anti-immigrant bigotry defines racist/rightist politics and is an acid test for the workers movement and left from West Europe to South Africa to East Asia. The ICL fights against deportations—for full citizenship rights for all immigrants! For labor/minority mobilizations to stop the fascists! For workers defense guards! For multiracial/multiethnic workers militias against communalist violence!

Fascist demagogues feed off unemployment, immiseration and insecurity endemic to the capitalist system. Fascist terror and government attacks on immigrants and other oppressed minorities can be combatted effectively only from the perspective of overthrowing the capitalist system and replacing it with an internationally planned and collectivized economy. As Trotsky wrote in 1930 when under the impact of the Great Depression the Nazi Party emerged as a real threat to take power in Germany: "The *Soviet United States of Europe*—that is the only correct slogan which points the way out of the splintering of Europe, which threatens not only Germany but all of Europe with complete economic and cultural decline" ("The Turn in the Communist International and the Situation in Germany," 26 September 1930).

The oppression of women, youth, minorities and all sectors of the oppressed must be analyzed and addressed in each country to find the most favorable point at which to apply the Marxist lever. As Lenin wrote in *What Is To Be Done?* (1902): "...the Social-Democrat's ideal should not be the trade union secretary, but *the tribune of the people*, who is able to react to every manifestation of tyranny and oppression, no matter where it appears, no matter what stratum or class of the people it affects; who is able to generalise all these manifestations and produce a single picture of police violence and capitalist exploitation; who is able to take advantage of every event, however small, in order to set forth *before all* his socialist convictions and his democratic demands, in order to clarify for *all* and everyone the world-historic significance of the struggle for the emancipation of the proletariat."

The ICL fights for women's liberation through socialist revolution. In countries of belated capitalist development, the acute oppression and degradation of women is deeply rooted in pre-capitalist "tradition" and religious obscurantism. In these countries the fight against women's oppression is therefore a motor force of revolutionary struggle. The condition of women in the most advanced capitalist countries, while far different, shows the limits of freedom and social progress under capitalism; revolutionists are the most consistent champions of women's elementary democratic rights such as free legal abortion and "equal pay for equal work." The reactionary social climate aggravated by the collapse of the Soviet Union and the concerted campaign to roll back "welfare state" protections of the masses has brought a sharp rise in anti-sex, anti-woman and anti-homosexual bigotry. We oppose all laws against crimes without victims, including those which criminalize homosexual or other consensual sexual activity, prostitution and drug use.

The oppression of women, the oldest social inequality in human history, goes back to the beginning of private property and will not be abolished short of the abolition of class-divided society. The fundamental social institution oppressing women is the family, whose function in the raising of the next generation must be superseded, with women's household labor replaced by collective institutions in a socialist society. We stand on the Bolsheviks' record of special organized work among women to win them to the

socialist cause, described in early issues of the SL/U.S. journal *Women and Revolution*.

While fighting against every manifestation of bourgeois injustice, we oppose sectoralism, which denies the possibility of consciousness transcending an individual's own experience of oppression, and fight to unite the vanguard of all oppressed social layers behind the proletariat in the fight for socialism.

Open the road to the youth! Key to building the international proletarian revolutionary party is the struggle to win a new generation of youth to the principles and program of Trotskyism. This includes not only the struggle to recruit young workers but also work among students. A particularly volatile layer of the petty-bourgeois intelligentsia, students can play an active role in "radical" activities of either the left or the right. We seek to win students to the side of the working class, recognizing like Lenin that a revolutionary party is built through the fusion of declassed revolutionary intellectuals with the most advanced layers of the proletariat. Youth serve a particular role as the cannon fodder for the wars and other military adventures of the capitalist rulers. Our opposition to the bourgeois army and to conscription is antithetical to that of pacifists or those who seek a petty-bourgeois exemption from an obligation imposed on working-class youth in many countries. We go in with our class with the purpose of winning proletarian soldiers to the program and purpose of communist revolution. In a revolutionary situation we understand that key to proletarian victory is the splitting of the conscript army along class lines.

Through our youth work we seek to recruit and train the future cadres of the revolutionary party through establishing transitional youth organizations which are both organizationally independent of and politically subordinate to the revolutionary party.

7. The Bourgeois Basis of Revisionism

Insofar as revolutionary consciousness is not prevalent among the workers, their consciousness is determined by the ideology of the ruling class. Objectively capitalism rules through the power of capital, its monopoly of the means of violence, and its control of all existing social institutions. But it prefers, when possible, to rule with the "consent" of the masses through the dominance of bourgeois ideology among the oppressed, fostering illusions and concealing its bloody essence. Nationalism, patriotism, racism and religion penetrate into the organizations of the workers, centrally through the agency of the petty-bourgeois "labor lieutenants"—the parasitic trade-union, social-democratic and Stalinist-derived bureaucracies based on the privileged upper strata of the working class. If not replaced by revolutionary leaderships, these reformists will allow the organizations of the workers to become impotent in the fight for the economic needs of the workers under conditions of bourgeois democracy or even allow these organizations to be destroyed by victorious fascism.

In his 1916 work on "Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism," Lenin laid out the material basis of the opportunism of the labor bureaucracy:

"The receipt of high monopoly profits by the capitalists in one of the numerous branches of industry, in one of the numerous countries, etc., makes it economically possible for them to

bribe certain sections of the workers, and for a time a fairly considerable minority of them, and win them to the side of the bourgeoisie of a given industry or given nation against all the others. The intensification of antagonisms between imperialist nations for the division of the world increases this urge. And so there is created that bond between imperialism and opportunism.... The most dangerous of all in this respect are those [like the Menshevik, Martov] who do not wish to understand that the fight against imperialism is a sham and humbug unless it is inseparably bound up with the fight against opportunism."

The degeneration and capitulation of tendencies within the Marxist movement has been of especially critical value to the preservation of imperialist rule. Submission to the pressure of bourgeois society has repeatedly thrust nominally Marxist currents toward *revisionism*, the process of ruling out Marxism's essential conclusion that the state is an instrument of class rule. Bernsteinian revisionism, Menshevism, Stalinism and its Maoist variant—all are illustrations of this process which constitutes a bridge to overtly reformist practices. Globally, besides the Stalinists and the Social Democrats, *nationalists* and *the politically religious* heavily work to derail working-class struggle.

Centrism is that programmatically heterogeneous and theoretically amorphous current in the workers movement that occupies numerous shadings in the political spectrum between Marxism and reformism, between revolutionary internationalism and opportunist social patriotism. As Trotsky noted in his 1934 article, "Centrism and the Fourth International":

"For a revolutionary Marxist the struggle against reformism is now almost fully replaced by the struggle against centrism.... The struggle with hidden or masked opportunists must therefore be transferred chiefly to the sphere of *practical conclusions from revolutionary requisites*."

In situations of sharp class struggle, the centrist pretenders who form part of the syphilitic chain maintaining bourgeois class rule become both more dangerous and more vulnerable to revolutionary exposure. The revolutionary Trotskyist vanguard will grow at the expense of our centrist opponents, or vice versa. The outcome of this confrontation between Marxism and centrism is a crucial factor in the success or failure of the revolution.

It is the unappealing reformist performance of social democracy and Stalinism that generated a revival of anarchism, an anti-Marxist ideology based on radical democratic idealism, which had been rendered moribund in the early years of this century by the revolutionary Marxism of the Bolsheviks. Similarly among unionists a revival of anti-political syndicalist moods is attributable to disgust with the behavior of all the old "socialist" parliamentarians; but this retreat to "pure" economic struggle only allows militant struggle to burn itself out without ever really challenging the reformist traitors.

8. The Struggle Against Imperialist War

Leon Trotsky codified the program of proletarian internationalist opposition to the wars inevitably engendered by decaying capitalism in his 1934 document "War and the Fourth International." As Trotsky noted: "*The transformation of imperialist war into civil war* is that general strategic task to which the whole work of a proletarian party during war should be subordinated." In interimperialist wars such



Robert Sennecke

Karl Liebknecht in Berlin, 1918: heroic German communist and proletarian leader fought against imperialist World War I.

as WWI and WWII, and in other wars between two relatively equally developed capitalist states, our basic principle is *revolutionary defeatism*: irreconcilable opposition to the capitalist slaughter and a recognition that *defeat of one's own bourgeoisie is a lesser evil*. As Wilhelm Liebknecht said, "Not a man and not a penny" for bourgeois militarism.

In wars of imperialist depredation against colonial, semi-colonial or dependent nations, the duty of the proletariat in every country is to aid the oppressed nations against the imperialists, while maintaining complete political independence from bourgeois and petty-bourgeois nationalist forces.

The proletariat must give unconditional military defense against imperialism to the deformed workers states in China, Vietnam, North Korea and Cuba. Our position flows from the proletarian class character of these states, embodied in the collectivized property relations—nationalized property, planned economy, monopoly of foreign trade and banking, etc.—established by social revolutions that destroyed capitalism. Despite the bureaucratic deformations of these states, our defense of them against the class enemy is unconditional, i.e., it does not depend on the prior overthrow of the Stalinist bureaucracies, nor does it depend upon the circumstances and immediate causes of the conflict.

The drive toward imperialist war is inherent in the capitalist system. Today's ideologues of "globalization" are projecting a false vision that the rival interests of competing nation states have been transcended in this post-Soviet period. This is nothing other than a rehash of Karl Kautsky's theory of "ultra-imperialism." As Lenin wrote in *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*:

"Compare this reality—the vast diversity of economic and political conditions, the extreme disparity in the rate of development of the various countries, etc., and the violent struggles among the imperialist states—with Kautsky's silly little fable

about 'peaceful' ultra-imperialism.... Is not American and other finance capital, which divided the whole world peacefully with Germany's participation in, for example, the international rail syndicate, or in the international mercantile shipping trust, now engaged in *redividing* the world on the basis of a new relation of forces that is being changed by methods *anything but peaceful*?"

9. The National Question and the Right of All Nations to Self-Determination

As Trotsky wrote in "War and the Fourth International" (10 June 1934):

"Having used the nation for its development, capitalism has nowhere, in no single corner of the world, solved fully the national problem."

The right of self-determination applies to all nations. The struggle by the proletarian leadership for *self-determination* of the oppressed nations is a powerful tool to break the grip of petty-bourgeois nationalist leaders on the masses. The ICL stands by Lenin's polemic (*The Right of Nations to Self-Determination*, February-May 1914) wherein Lenin states: "The interests of the working class and of its struggle against capitalism demand complete solidarity and the closest unity of the workers of all nations; they demand resistance to the nationalist policy of the bourgeoisie of every nationality."

We stand by Lenin's argument that "Successful struggle against exploitation requires that the proletariat be free of nationalism, and be absolutely neutral, so to speak, in the fight for supremacy that is going on among the bourgeoisie of the various nations. If the proletariat of any one nation gives the slightest support to the privileges of its 'own' national bourgeoisie, that will inevitably rouse distrust among the proletariat of another nation; it will weaken the international class solidarity of the workers and divide them, to the delight of the bourgeoisie. Repudiation of the right to self-determination or to secession inevitably means, in practice, support for the privileges of the dominant nation."

However, when the particular demand for national self-determination—a democratic demand—contradicts class questions or the general needs of the class struggle, we oppose its exercise. As Lenin noted in "The Discussion on Self-Determination Summed Up" (July 1916): "The several demands of democracy, including self-determination, are not an absolute, but only a *small part* of the general-democratic (now: general-socialist) *world* movement. In individual concrete cases, the part may contradict the whole; if so, it must be rejected." Lenin strongly supported Poland's right of self-determination, arguing this point against other revolutionary socialists like Rosa Luxemburg. But in the particular context of World War I, Lenin argued: "The Polish Social-Democrats cannot, at the moment, raise the slogan of Poland's independence, for the Poles, as proletarian internationalists, can do *nothing* about it without stooping, like the 'Fracy' [social-chauvinists], to humble servitude to *one* of the imperialist monarchies."

In our approach to the interpenetration of two or more peoples claiming the same territory, the ICL is guided by the practice and experience of the Bolsheviks, in particular the discussion on the Ukraine at the Second Congress of the Communist International. The ICL elaborated on this position

with regard to the Near East, Cyprus, Northern Ireland and the former Yugoslavia. In such situations, under capitalism—in which the state power is necessarily dominated by a single nation—the democratic right of national self-determination cannot be achieved for one people without violating the national rights of the other. Hence these conflicts cannot be equitably resolved within a capitalist framework. The precondition for a democratic solution is to sweep away all the bourgeoisies of the region.

10. Colonial Revolution, Permanent Revolution and the "Guerrilla Road"

Experience since the Second World War has completely validated the Trotskyist theory of the permanent revolution which declares that in the imperialist epoch the bourgeois-democratic revolution can be completed only by a proletarian dictatorship supported by the peasantry. Only under the leadership of the revolutionary proletariat can the colonial and semicolonial countries obtain genuine national emancipation. To open the road to socialism requires the extension of the revolution to the advanced capitalist countries.

The October Revolution itself refuted the Menshevik idea of the revolution as stagist; the Mensheviks proposed a political bloc with the liberal Cadet party to place the bourgeoisie in power. "The Menshevik idea of union between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie actually meant submission of the workers as well as the peasants to the liberals.... In 1905 the Mensheviks merely lacked the courage to draw all the necessary inferences from their theory of 'bourgeois' revolution. In 1917, pursuing their ideas to the bitter end, they broke their neck" (Trotsky, "Three Concepts of the Russian Revolution," first published 1942).

Lenin's Bolsheviks were closer to Trotsky's view in that they insisted that the Russian bourgeoisie was incapable of leading a democratic revolution. The Bolsheviks argued for an alliance between the working class and the peasantry, culminating in the "democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry," a flawed slogan projecting a state defending the interests of two different classes. In 1917 following the February revolution, it took a sharp fight within the Bolshevik Party for Lenin's "April Theses" line for the dictatorship of the proletariat to prevail. However the failure of the Bolshevik Party to explicitly recognize the vindication of Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution by the October Revolution and the failure to explicitly repudiate the "democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry" then became a conduit for the forces later posturing as the Bolshevik "old guard" (e.g. Stalin) to attack Trotsky, the theory of permanent revolution and the revolutionary internationalist premises and implications of the Bolshevik Revolution.

Trotsky wrote in his 29 March 1930 introduction to the German edition of *The Permanent Revolution*:

"Under the guise of providing an economic justification for internationalism, Stalin in reality presents a justification for national socialism. It is false that world economy is simply a sum of national parts of one and the same type. It is false that the specific features are 'merely supplementary to the general features,' like warts on a face. In reality, the national peculiarities represent an original combination of the basic features of the world process."

In *The Permanent Revolution* (30 November 1929) Trotsky explained:

"Under the conditions of the imperialist epoch the national democratic revolution can be carried through to a victorious end only when the social and political relationships of the country are mature for putting the proletariat in power as the leader of the masses of the people. And if this is not yet the case? Then the struggle for national liberation will produce only very partial results, results directed entirely against the working masses.

"A backward colonial or semi-colonial country, the proletariat of which is insufficiently prepared to unite the peasantry and take power, is thereby incapable of bringing the democratic revolution to its conclusion."

The partial character of the anti-capitalist revolutions in the colonial world leads us to reaffirm the Marxist-Leninist concept of the proletariat as the only social force capable of making the socialist revolution. The ICL fundamentally opposes the Maoist doctrine, rooted in Menshevism and Stalinist reformism, which rejects the vanguard role of the working class and substitutes peasant-based guerrilla warfare as the road to socialism.

A further extension of Marxism contributed by the International Communist League in analyzing Stalinism was our understanding of the Cuban Revolution (see *Marxist Bulletin* No. 8, "Cuba and Marxist Theory"), which retrospectively illuminated the course of the Yugoslav and Chinese Revolutions. In Cuba, a petty-bourgeois movement under exceptional circumstances—the absence of the working class as a contender for social power in its own right, the flight of the national bourgeoisie and hostile imperialist encirclement, and a lifeline thrown by the Soviet Union—did overthrow the old Batista dictatorship and eventually smash capitalist property relations. But Castroism (or other peasant-based guerrilla movements) cannot bring the working class to political power.

Under the most *favorable* historic circumstances conceivable, the petty-bourgeois peasantry was only capable of creating a bureaucratically deformed workers state, that is, a state of the same order as that issuing out of the political counterrevolution of Stalin in the Soviet Union, an anti-working-class regime which blocked the possibilities to extend social revolution into Latin America and North America, and suppressed Cuba's further development in the direction of socialism. To place the working class in political power and open the road to socialist development requires a supplemental *political* revolution led by a Trotskyist party. With the destruction of the Soviet degenerated workers state and consequently no readily available lifeline against imperialist encirclement, the narrow historical opening in which petty-bourgeois forces were able to overturn local capitalist rule has been closed, underscoring the Trotskyist perspective of permanent revolution.

11. The Popular Front: Not a Tactic But the Greatest Crime

From Spain in 1936 to Chile in 1973, ripe opportunities for proletarian revolution have been derailed through the mechanism of the popular front, which ties the exploited to their exploiters, and opens the road to fascist and bonapartist dictatorships. Leon Trotsky asserted: "By lulling the workers and peasants with parliamentary illusions, by paralyzing their will to struggle, the People's Front creates favorable



Storia Illustrata

Italy, 1943: Partisans take up arms against fascist regime. In 1945, Stalinist leaders organized "victory celebrations" which ended with the disarming of the Partisans.

conditions for the victory of fascism. The policy of coalition with the bourgeoisie must be paid for by the proletariat with years of new torments and sacrifice, if not by decades of fascist terror" ("The New Revolutionary Upsurge and the Tasks of the Fourth International," July 1936).

Like Lenin and Trotsky, the ICL opposes in principle any coalition with capitalist parties ("popular fronts") whether in government or in opposition, and we oppose voting for workers parties in popular fronts. Parliamentary governments formed by reformist workers parties ("bourgeois workers parties" as defined by Lenin) are capitalist governments administering capitalist rule (for example, various governments of the Labour Party in Britain). In cases where a mass reformist workers party presents itself as representing the interests of the working class independently of and against the parties of the bourgeoisie, it may be appropriate for revolutionaries to apply the tactic of critical support ("as a rope supports a hanged man"). Such critical electoral support serves as a means for revolutionists to exacerbate the contradiction between the proletarian base and the pro-capitalist leadership. However, the inclusion of even small non-proletarian political formations (such as liberals or eco-faddist "Greens" in the West, or bourgeois nationalists) acts as a guarantor of the bourgeois program, suppressing this contradiction.

The "anti-imperialist united front" is the particular form that class collaboration most often assumes in the colonial and ex-colonial countries, from the liquidation of the Chinese Communist Party into Chiang Kai-shek's Guomindang in the 1920s to decades of prostration of the South African "left" before the African National Congress (ANC), which has become the imperialist-sponsored front men for neo-apartheid capitalism. Today in Latin America, "anti-Yankee" nationalism is the main tool whereby militant workers and

insurgent peasants are induced to place their hopes in bourgeois "radicals." Trotsky's program of permanent revolution is the alternative to placing confidence in fantasies resting upon the backward, imperialist-dependent bourgeoisie of one's own oppressed country as the vehicle for liberation.

12. The Revolutionary Party: Its Program, Organization, and Discipline

"Without a party, apart from a party, over the head of a party, or with a substitute for a party, the proletarian revolution cannot conquer" (Leon Trotsky, *The Lessons of October* [1924]). We strive to build the revolutionary party, the instrument for bringing political consciousness to the proletariat, seeking to become the main offensive and guiding force through which the working class makes and consolidates the socialist revolution. Our aim is a revolutionary general staff whose leading cadre must be trained and tested in the class struggle. The party fights to gain the leadership of the class on the basis of its program and revolutionary determination; it seeks to understand the whole of the past in order to assess the present situation. The challenge is to recognize and boldly respond to the revolutionary moment when it comes, that moment when the forces of the proletariat are most confident and prepared and the forces of the old order most demoralized and disorganized. In such a revolutionary party is crystallized the aspiration of the masses to obtain their freedom; it symbolizes their revolutionary will and will be the instrument of their victory.

As Trotsky wrote in the "Transitional Program":

"The strategic task of the next period—a prerevolutionary period of agitation, propaganda, and organization—consists in overcoming the contradiction between the maturity of the objective revolutionary conditions and the immaturity of the proletariat and its vanguard (the confusion and disappointment of the older generation, the inexperience of the younger generation). It is necessary to help the masses in the process of the daily struggle to find the bridge between present demands and the socialist program of the revolution. This bridge should include a system of *transitional 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."

The vanguard party must devote the same conscious attention to the question of party leadership as the party devotes to fighting for the consciousness of the advanced workers. In "The Mistakes of Rightist Elements of the Communist League on the Trade Union Question" (4 January 1931), Trotsky wrote:

"Whatever may be the social sources and political causes of opportunistic mistakes and deviations, they are always reduced ideologically to an erroneous understanding of the revolutionary party, of its relation to other proletarian organizations and to the class as a whole."

The united front is a primary tactic especially in unsettled periods to both mobilize a broad mass in struggle for a common demand and to strengthen the authority of the vanguard party within the class. The formula of "march separately, strike together" means action in unison in defense of the workers' interests, while allowing for the clash of competing opinions in the context of a common political experience.

The communist tactic of the united front allows the vanguard to approach separate and otherwise hostile organiza-

tions for common action. It is counterposed to the "Third Period" Stalinists' "united front from below" which demands unity with the "ranks" against their leaders, reinforcing organizational lines and precluding joint action. A united front requires full "freedom of criticism"—i.e., participants are able to present their own slogans and propaganda.

A hallmark of retreat from revolutionary purpose is the practice of propaganda blocs: the subordination of the proletarian program to opportunists in the name of "unity." A similar purpose is served by the idea of a "strategic united front" which transforms the united front into a hoped-for standing "coalition" on a lowest-common-denominator program. As against all such schemes, the revolutionary party cannot be built without a fight for political clarity and relentless exposure of reformist and especially centrist forces.

The ICL stands on the principles and record of the International Labor Defense, the American arm of the early Comintern's International Red Aid. We seek to carry forward the ILD's heritage of non-sectarian, partisan class-struggle defense work, defending irrespective of their political views militant fighters for the working class and oppressed. While utilizing all democratic rights available from the bourgeois legal system, we seek to mobilize mass labor-centered protest, placing all our faith in the power of the masses and no faith whatever in the "justice" of the bourgeois courts. The greatest obstacle to reviving the traditions of labor solidarity is the infamous practices of Stalinist and social-democratic organizations: violence within the workers movement, slander of opponents, and manipulative "front group" maneuvering.

The organizational principle within the International Communist League is *democratic-centralism*, a balance between internal democracy and functional discipline. As a combat organization, the revolutionary vanguard must be capable of unified and decisive action at all times in the class struggle. All members must be mobilized to carry out the decisions of the majority; authority must be centralized in its elected leadership which interprets tactically the organization's program. Internal democracy permits the collective determination of the party's line in accord with the needs felt by the party's ranks who are closest to the class as a whole. The right to factional democracy is vital to a living movement; the very existence of this right helps to channel differences into less absorbing means of resolution.

The *discipline* of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist) flows from its program and purpose, the victory of the socialist revolution and the liberation of all mankind.

13. We Will Intervene to Change History!

"Marxism is not a dogma, but a guide to action." The International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist) is in the forefront of the struggle for a socialist future. The ICL is the only international organization which presently has a correct general conception of the world situation and of the tasks facing the world proletariat. The disparity between our small numbers and the power of our program is huge. Currently the sections of the ICL are or aim to



Spartacist

3 January 1990: ICL spokesman Renate Dahlhaus (at microphone) addresses demonstration of 250,000 protesting fascist desecration of Soviet war memorial in East Berlin. Spartacist speakers denounced SPD as frontmen for counterrevolution in East Germany, called for "a new workers party in the spirit of Lenin" and for "workers and soldiers soviets to power."

be *fighting propaganda groups*. Our immediate task is the education and formation of cadres, recruiting the most advanced layers of workers and youth by winning them over to our full program through explanation of our views in sharp counterposition to those of our centrist opponents. Revolutionary regroupments on the program of Leninist internationalism are the means to resolve the disproportion between our small forces and our task.

Like Lenin's Bolsheviks, our aim is to fuse together intellectual and proletarian elements, above all through the development and struggle of communist industrial fractions. By means of propagandistic literature one can educate the first cadres, but one cannot rally the proletarian vanguard which lives neither in a circle nor in a schoolroom but in a class society, in a factory, in the organizations of the masses, a vanguard to whom one must know how to speak in the language of its experiences. Even the best prepared propagandist cadres will inevitably disintegrate if they do not find contact with the daily struggle of the masses.

Communist work in the trade unions must be oriented to winning over the base, not unprincipled blocs and maneuvers at the top. Absolutely essential is the struggle for the complete and unconditional independence of the trade unions in relation to the capitalist state. Use of the bourgeois courts against political opponents in the trade unions or the workers movement is a breach of the principle of proletarian independence and an attack on the labor movement's strength. Inviting the class enemy to intervene in the unions' internal affairs promotes illusions in bourgeois democracy by portraying the state as "neutral" between classes. Police are not "workers in uniform" but the hired guns of the capitalist state; they have no place in the workers' organizations. The ICL fights for "cops out of the unions." Our fight for the principle of proletarian independence from the state is underscored by the tendency pointed out by Trotsky in his unfinished 1940 essay, "Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay," for the reformist trade unions to grow ever more intertwined with the state.

Communists seek to build the strongest possible unity of the working class against the capitalist exploiters; therefore,

we oppose craft divisions in the proletariat and stand for *industrial unionism*, and oppose the splitting of the working class into competing unions based on different political tendencies or ethnic groupings. In contradistinction, the task of the communist vanguard is to clarify and sharpen the differences between competing political tendencies in order to assemble the cadre for a Leninist party. In Lenin's time these different political tasks were reflected in different organizational forms: the Comintern composed of the party organizations representing the unique Bolshevik political program and the Profintern representing the struggle for the unity of the working class in the unions.

We believe that the reforming of a communist Fourth International, built of authentic communist parties on every inhabited continent and tested in thoroughgoing intervention in the class struggle, will be arduous and often dangerous. The road forward for all of humanity is for the presently small forces adhering to the revolutionary program of Lenin and Trotsky to forge parties with the experience, willpower and authority among the masses to lead successful proletarian revolutions. Yet as we seek to bring this program to bear among the world's workers and oppressed, we must recognize that the possession of the technology of nuclear holocaust by an irrational imperialist ruling class foreshortens the possibilities: we don't have a lot of time.

We are guided by the precepts and practices of comrades such as Lenin and Trotsky:

"To face reality squarely; not to seek the line of least resistance; to call things by their right names; to speak the truth to the masses, no matter how bitter it may be; not to fear obstacles; to be true in little things as in big ones; to base one's program on the logic of the class struggle; to be bold when the hour for action arrives—these are the rules of the Fourth International" ("The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International," 1938).

These are the rules of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist) as we go forward in the historical task of leading the working class to the victory of world socialism!

On the Origins and Development of Leninist Organizational Practices

We are pleased to publish in this issue of Spartacist an edited transcript of the report on the draft ICL International Rules and Guidelines presented to the Third International Conference. The report was given by comrade Elizabeth Kendall on behalf of the commission appointed by the International Secretariat to draft organizational rules for our international party; the discussion, amendment and adoption of the Organizational Rules and Guidelines was one of the central tasks of the conference.

Comrade Kendall's remarks, reviewing the guiding conceptions and practices of organized communists since the beginning of communist organization, provided the necessary historical background for the conference delegates' consideration of the draft Rules. The report also took up particulars of the draft about which there were questions or controversies; these comments are not included here. The final Rules document as adopted by the conference appears on pages 31-40 of this issue.

It is appropriate to present the draft Organizational Rules following the discussion on the Declaration of Principles and Some Elements of Program. The organizational structure of the party cannot be separated from its aims.

In *The Struggle for a Proletarian Party*, James Cannon makes this point:

"Organization questions and organizational methods are not independent of political lines, but subordinate to them. As a rule, the organizational methods flow from the political line. Indeed, the whole significance of organization is to realize a political program. In the final analysis there are no exceptions to this rule. It is not the organization—the party or group—which creates the program; rather it is the program that creates the organization, or conquers and utilizes an existing one."

Living organizational rules are one of perhaps a half-dozen elements that characterize an organization; in that sense, they are political. But they are not determinate. A sound set of organizational rules is not a guard against political departures, although departures from our organizational norms are generally a signal of political problems. In the absence of Bolshevik practices, an organization is necessarily amorphous, that is, Menshevik.

A good example is our experience with the Healyites. The Spartacist League/U.S. and its predecessor, the Revolutionary Tendency in the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), looked to Gerry Healy's International Committee of the Fourth International (IC) in the early 1960s because of its fight against the Pabloite liquidation of the struggle for Trotskyist parties as indispensable instruments for the proletarian conquest of power. Despite Healy's bureaucratic abuses, we continued to solidarize with his International Committee, noting the contradiction between its formally correct program and its corrupt internal regime. But shortly after the London Conference in 1966, as the IC made a programmatic break with Leninism in embracing Mao's "Cultural Revolution" and in espousing Arab nationalism, we understood that their organizational practices were an indication of political departures. Our experience with Healy shows that you can't judge an organization simply by what it says in

print, but must see its actual political practice.

Organizational rules are also not immutable principles written in stone for all time. Jack Barnes, who helped lead the American SWP in its slide from a centrist organization to a reformist one, once presented the SWP's organizational rules to their youth group as "very simply, rules to follow." He was quite wrong; rules in a revolutionary organization are guidelines for conducting the work of revolutionary Marxists. They must necessarily develop as we seek the best way to carry out our purpose under constantly varying circumstances.

Our International, like our national sections, is democratic-centralist. Comrade Robertson related an occasion in which Asher Harer, a member of the National Committee of the SWP, told a group of former members of the Communist Party (CP) that democratic-centralism was "nature's way." This is not true. As Cannon wrote in 1953:

"Democratic-centralism has no special virtue per se. It is the specific principle of a combat party, united by a single program, which aims to lead a revolution. Social Democrats have no need of such a system of organization for the simple reason that they have no intention of organizing a revolution. Their democracy and centralism are not united by a hyphen but kept in separate compartments for separate purposes. The democracy is for the social patriots and the centralism is for the revolutionists."

— "Leninist Organization Principles," *Speeches to the Party* (1973)

Democratic-centralism, simply defined, is the practice whereby the membership discusses and debates the questions before the party and comes to a decision; once that decision is made, the party presents its position and intervenes as a single, disciplined force. As a negative example, we have the Permanent Revolution Faction (PRF) in the Ligue Trotskyste de France (LTF). The PRF raised its differences over program with the party majority and fought for its positions. Such a factional division is both necessary and permitted among members. But the PRF was linked up with Norden's Internationalist Group (IG), a hostile opponent organization; it's likely the IG was running the PRF from the outset, but in any case it took its disputes outside the party. One can struggle inside the organization or outside of it, but not both. The LTF called the faction members before a control commission to inquire about their connections with the IG, and when they refused to answer, quite rightly expelled them.

Democratic-centralism is the party's mechanism for developing its program from its principles, for struggling internally against external pressures that threaten to derail the program or revise the principles, for allowing factional struggle where disputes cannot be contained within a common program, and for testing that program in action.

Our Declaration of Principles lays out the conception of democratic-centralism as:

"A balance between internal democracy and functional discipline. As a combat organization, the revolutionary vanguard must be capable of unified and decisive action at all times in the class struggle. All members must be mobilized to carry out



E. Schaumann

Karl Marx's International Workingmen's Association (First International) holds founding conference in London, 28 September 1864.

the decisions of the majority; authority must be centralized in its elected leadership which interprets tactically the organization's program. Internal democracy permits the collective determination of the party's line in accord with the needs felt by the party's ranks who are closest to the class as a whole. The right to factional democracy is vital to a living movement; the very existence of this right helps to channel differences into less absorbing means of resolution."

Historic Precedents of Marxist Organizational Practice

Our organizational rules are based on our own experiences and on the best standard practice of the Leninist and Trotskyist movement. We trace our political lineage back to 1847 when Marx and Engels won over a section of the League of the Just, leading to the formation of the Communist League. The Revolutions of 1848, which erupted shortly thereafter, signaled the opening of the modern era. What follows is an outline of some of the history of the international Marxist movement since that time, to explain the development of our organizational practice as codified in the draft Rules.

The Communist League was the first international organization of the proletariat with a communist program and the first attempt at a fusion of socialist intellectuals with the working class. Lenin later built the revolutionary vanguard party as we know it on this basis, recognizing that the working class does not spontaneously develop socialist politics; they must be brought to the class from without.

The Communist League was a relatively homogeneous cadre organization: its members had read the same literature

and experienced many of the same events. Its declaration of principles was the *Communist Manifesto*; its purpose was to establish the rule of the proletariat. It saw itself as a vanguard organization, but not in the Leninist sense. Marx believed that the working class could come to power by riding on the coattails of the bourgeois-democratic revolutions then taking place across Europe. Marxists sought to win the leadership of the working class away from bourgeois radicals and non-socialist leaders such as Feargus O'Connor of the British Chartists. Thus, British members of the Communist League were allowed to remain in the Chartist organization with the perspective of fighting within it for the politics of the League.

While the Communist League was neither a Leninist party nor a legal formation, we in the International Communist League (ICL) would find its organizational rules familiar. Membership was based on adherence to the aims of the organization. The International Congress—based on delegates elected in proportion to the size of the national sections—was the highest authority of the International, and members of the Central Council were given fraternal status at the congresses. The Communist League's provisions for financial accounting were not too different from ours. It was a centralized group; the organizational rules specified that "members shall obey the decisions of the League; they shall not disclose any matters concerning the internal life of the League."

The Communist League dissolved in 1852. The Revolutions of 1848 had shown that rather than carrying out the bourgeois-democratic tasks before them, the bourgeoisies in Europe allied with the forces of reaction. The proletariat was strong enough to scare the ruling classes with the spectre of proletarian revolution, but not strong enough to carry it out.

The International Workingmen's Association, later known as the First International, was formed 12 years later, in 1864. While it was larger than the Communist League, it was also much more politically heterogeneous. The working class had grown considerably since 1848 but it was also less class-conscious. The Workingmen's Association's biggest impetus came from the London Trades Council, an organization of liberal trade unionists seeking to undercut competition from other European workers who were being brought in to work in England. Additionally, the Workingmen's Association included the cooperativist movement in France inspired by the anarchist doctrines of Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, an Italian section headed by a devoutly religious revolutionary republican, and some former members of the Communist League from Germany. Somewhat later Mikhail Bakunin and his anarchist followers came on board.

As put forward in an Inaugural Address written by Marx, the purpose of the International Workingmen's Association was not explicitly communist. At the time, Marx thought that the working class needed a period of bourgeois-democratic rule to shed its illusions in the radical bourgeoisie; he also thought that the socialist movement needed some time to regroup its forces after the severe repression following the defeat of the Revolutions of 1848. Through the Workingmen's Association, Marx sought to gain a hearing for his revolutionary views among the mass organizations of the working class, hoping to win over their non-socialist leaders through further experience.

Accordingly, the Workingmen's Association was not a centralized organization. One of its organizational rules



Roger Viollet

Delegates to the 1904 Amsterdam Congress of the Second International. Consistent with the idea of a "party of the whole class," the Second International included such eminent figures as G. Plekhanov and Karl Kautsky, and both right-wing socialists such as H. M. Hyndman and future communists such as Sen Katayama and Rosa Luxemburg.

specified, "While united in a perpetual bond of fraternal cooperation, the workingmen's societies joining the International Association will preserve their existent organisations intact." Its federated quality was captured by John Hales, a leading British trade unionist, who said, "[Marx] is secretary for Germany, and would as little dream of interfering in English affairs as I would in German." (That's not too different from Norden's idea of how our International Secretariat should work.)

During the eight years of the existence of the Workingmen's Association, Marx fought against the Proudhonists and the anarchists for the conception of a political party of the working class. However, the fight with the anarchists was not carried out fully until after its foremost spokesman, Bakunin, had been expelled. But by then the Paris Commune of 1871 had taken place, and the Workingmen's Association collapsed shortly thereafter when the Commune posed the question of proletarian revolution.

Lenin's Struggle to Build a Vanguard Party of the Working Class

The Second, or Socialist, International was founded in 1889, again under the impetus of the trade-union movement. The proletariat had grown; much of the influence of the anarchists and Proudhonists had subsided because their base, the artisan proletariat, had shrunk with the development of the industrial working-class. Marxism had gained authority as the political current of the working-class movement, although many of those who professed adherence to Marxism had a very shallow idea of what it really was.

While the First International had been more like an ongoing united front between disparate political tendencies, the Second International made an attempt to elaborate a coherent program. But while the First International had tried to centralize working-class power and to put together an international leadership for the labor movement, the Second International was a loose federation of autonomous parties (although some of those parties were themselves tightly organized). In fact, for its first eleven years, the Second International seems to have had no statutes or organizational structure whatever. In 1900, an International Socialist Bureau was established to act as a liaison between the different parties and to organize the congresses.

A look at some of the national parties adhering to the Second International illuminates Lenin's fight to cohere a revolutionary vanguard party. The Social-Democratic Party

of Germany (SPD) was the pre-eminent Marxist party of the time. Basing itself on German peculiarities, the SPD held that the party could in a linear and gradual fashion grow in numbers and influence until it could be voted into power. However, a majority of the party believed that the German ruling class would not allow the proletariat to come to power peacefully and that an insurrectionary struggle would be necessary to establish a workers government.

The SPD rested on the conception of the "party of the whole class"—that all of the currents among the politically conscious workers should be organized in a single party. The party organized the working class politically and at the trade-union level, but the framework was parliamentarism, excluding any anticipation of an insurrection. The SPD was formally democratic-centralist, but since the party was organized for the purpose of winning elections rather than fighting for workers power, its centralism was fairly bureaucratic—there was a disjuncture between the active leadership and the passive members. This was reflected in its financing as well; those with money tended to call the shots.

The British Labour Party joined the Second International in 1908. Founded in 1900, the Labour Party, called the Labour Representation Committee for its first six years, was created not as a Marxist party but to elect trade-union candidates to Parliament. It didn't even call for the nationalization of industry, a plank that was only added in 1918 to improve Labour's credentials in the wake of the Bolshevik Revolution. It was not a centralized organization; decisions tended to be made by the parliamentary fraction, which was called the Parliamentary Labour Party and decided everything on a day-to-day basis. At the party congresses, the trade-union leaders came in with their bloc votes. Between them, they had the party pretty well tied up.

The Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party (RSDLP) was also part of the Second International. However, the backward conditions of tsarist Russia at the time of the founding of the RSDLP in 1898 were quite different from those in relatively placid Europe, where no serious social disruption such as a war or revolution had occurred since 1871. The virtual laboratory for struggle in Russia laid the basis for forging an entirely different kind of party.

Developing from his conviction that the proletariat would have to play the central role in the overthrow of the tsarist autocracy, Lenin saw the need for a party whose members were actively involved and disciplined. In 1903, he fought over the definition of membership in the famous "paragraph 1" of the

party statutes. In *One Step Forward, Two Steps Back* (May 1904), Lenin laid out the opposition of his Bolshevik faction to the Mensheviks' view of the party, denouncing

"[the Mensheviks'] advocacy of a diffuse, not strongly welded, Party organisation; their hostility to the idea (the 'bureaucratic' idea) of building the Party from the top downwards, starting from the Party Congress and the bodies set up by it; their tendency to proceed from the bottom upwards, allowing every professor, every high-school student and 'every striker' to declare himself a member of the Party; their hostility to the 'formalism' which demands that a party member should belong to one of the organisations recognized by the party; their leaning towards the mentality of the bourgeois intellectual, who is only prepared to 'accept organisational relations platonically'; their penchant for opportunist profundity and for anarchistic phrases; their tendency towards autonomism as against centralism...."

— V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 7

The SPD and the International Socialist Bureau intervened repeatedly in the fight between the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks in favor of unity of the two factions and against Lenin's attempts to forge a disciplined vanguard.

We take for granted that the ICL has a Bolshevik standard of membership. Yet when we went to draft the international rules, we realized that we had not clearly delineated membership standards in the rules for the Spartacist League/U.S. (SL/U.S.). While this error has had no evident repercussions to date, it needs to be fixed. As Article III.1 of the draft ICL rules spells out:

"A member of the ICL must agree with its Statement of Purpose and accept its program, decisions and rules, belong to and personally participate in one of the party organizations, and pay a sustaining pledge according to a progressive taxation schedule set by the section."

Prior to 1914, Lenin saw the reformist and opportunist currents as basically extrinsic to the working class, and he fought for a faction within the "party of the whole class" that would be a centralized vanguard formation. But on 4 August 1914, the SPD's parliamentary fraction voted for war credits for the German bourgeois government, signaling the collapse of the Second International into social-patriotic—and thus warring—national parties. Shortly after the onset of World War I, Lenin was able to generalize his fight within the RSDLP. Realizing that the source of reformism and opportunism was within the workers movement itself, he drew the implication: the necessity for a party that would fight to break the working class from its ties to other social classes and from bourgeois ideology in the form of reconciliation

with the employers and the state, with racism, religious reaction and nationalism.

Lenin's conception of a vanguard party and the practice of the Bolsheviks were tested and confirmed in the October Revolution of 1917. The Russian Revolution could not have happened without the work of the Bolshevik Party to make the proletariat conscious of its tasks and historic mission and to develop a steeled cadre organization as the effective instrument to lead it. In 1919, the Bolsheviks founded the Communist International, the Comintern, as an instrument whose sections could lead similar revolutions throughout the world.

The organizational conceptions of the Comintern were first laid out at its Second Congress in 1920. The impact of the Russian Revolution had led a number of parties of the Social Democracy and syndicalist groups to adhere to the Communist International, but they had yet to break fully with the political and organizational traditions of their former organizations. In some of the new communist parties, such as the German, Scandinavian, French and Italian, reformist and social-democratic wings were condoned or catered to. Thus the Hungarian Revolution of 1919 was defeated in part because the Hungarian Communist Party, with the consent of the International Executive, had amalgamated with the social democrats, who went over to the bourgeoisie at the decisive moment.

The Second Congress of the Comintern set out to politically homogenize the International. The preamble to the statutes voted at the Congress noted:

"The Communist International must, in fact and in deed, be a single communist party of the entire world. The parties working in the various countries are but its separate sections."

This statement against federalism is an important principle of organization which the ICL has followed.

The Second Congress adopted the "21 Conditions," the Conditions of Admission to the Communist International, which specifies the basic political principles for every section of the Comintern. The 21 Conditions generated much debate, ranging from protests that they were too restrictive to arguments that they were not hard enough. Lenin intervened to say that a "sincerometer" had yet to be invented to test people's good faith. He insisted that the necessary sorting out would happen through political struggle against the representatives of the labor aristocracy. As Christian Rakovsky noted, "It is not the conditions of entry into the Communist

Lenin and the Vanguard Party

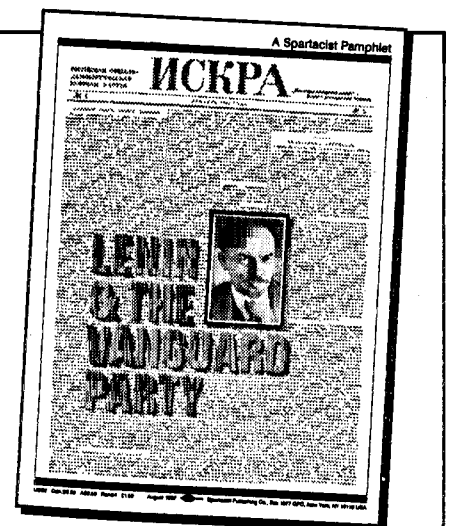
New Edition

First published in 1978, this pamphlet provides a detailed historical and theoretical account of Lenin's struggle for a vanguard party. Includes: "In Defense of Democratic Centralism"

This edition also includes:
"The Fight for a Leninist Vanguard Party"

\$2 (56 pages)

Order from/make checks payable to:
Spartacist Publishing Co., Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116, USA



International that offer us guarantees. They must be regarded as a minimum..." (*Second Congress of the Communist International*, Vol. 1).

At the Third Congress the bare bones of organizational provisions were given flesh with the adoption of the "Guidelines on the Organizational Structure of Communist Parties, on the Methods and Content of Their Work." As we said in our introduction to the Organizational Resolution (*Prometheus Research Series* No. 1):

"The Organizational Resolution fully embodied Lenin's final understanding of the means and ways to shape a 'communist party' into an authentic revolutionary workers vanguard."

The thrust of the Organizational Resolution is to activate the entire party. Key to this was that parties must carry out their work through fractions, that is, the local branches must establish smaller working bodies in areas where members were concentrated, particularly in industry. Through fractions, the party could take the pulse of the masses, test its slogans and tactics; through locals, the fraction members would bring this information back into the party; it would be discussed and voted on; new slogans and tactics would be disseminated throughout the organization, particularly through the press as a collective organizer, and taken back through the fractions to the masses.

Comrade Crawford once called this "participatory democracy." While that phrase has a bad ring to those of us who were recruited out of the New Left, it does capture a quality. The necessary corollary is that unless you have centralism, where every member carries the same line into their work, you cannot test the tactics and strategy to go forward.

In his only public speech to the Fourth Congress (1922), Lenin spoke to the urgent necessity that the parties of the Comintern understand and implement the resolution. Understanding that the immediate revolutionary wave had passed, he insisted on the need for training and educating the various groups that had rallied around the successful Russian Revolution to forge them into serious communist parties.

Trotsky's Fight for a New International

Beginning in 1923, the Comintern underwent a process of bureaucratization as part of the Stalinist political counterrevolution which represented the degeneration of the Soviet workers state. The adoption in 1924 of the "theory" of "socialism in one country" aimed to transform the communist parties outside the Soviet Union into mere border guards pursuing popular-front alliances and repudiating class struggle to overthrow their own bourgeoisies. I'd like to take up two issues dealing with the organizational structure of the party during the course of its Stalinist perversion, which finally led in 1943 to the liquidation of the Comintern altogether.

The Third Congress Organizational Resolution called for the creation of cells in conjunction with geographic locals. Beginning in January 1924 and continuing especially with the "Bolshevization" of the Comintern in April 1925, the Stalinist bureaucracy reorganized the International in a way that would facilitate the political domination of its faction. The cell structure became the *exclusive* unit of organization. Instead of units based on geographic location, small handfuls of members were organized in cells based on factories. Each cell had a leader who reported along with other cell leaders in the area to district bodies. Then there were periodic aggregate meetings of all the cells, generally called after decisions were made by higher bodies, which could be

nothing other than rubber stamps—usually of expulsions.

With an organization based on cells, the membership no longer has control over the leadership. Decisions are made from the top down. The party develops a caste of functionaries—in effect, going back to the active leaders and passive members that characterized the Second International. The party cannot act as a tribune of the people if its sole unit of organization is within a factory. The cell structure also obliterates factional rights. Our conception of factional democracy is not that members get to voice criticisms in toothless aggregate meetings but that one can run and be elected on a political line.

One of the formative fights in our tendency was with Ellens and Turner in 1968. Ellens came back from France recruited to the perspective of Voix Ouvrière, a group with which we had fraternal relations at the time (one of our several unsuccessful attempts in those days to break out of the national isolation of the American section). Voix Ouvrière, which today we in the U.S. know as Spark and in France as Lutte Ouvrière, had such a cell structure. We fought against Ellens' enthusing over Voix Ouvrière's organizational practice, which *atomizes* the membership. Comrades can read about this fight in the internal bulletins of the SL/U.S.

In addition to the Organizational Resolution, the Third Congress of the Comintern adopted a resolution on the organization of the Communist International, which spelled out some of the norms for the Executive Committee of the Communist International (ECCI), which we call the International Executive Committee (IEC). It provided for "fully empowered" representatives of the ECCI to be sent to the various sections, charged with sending information back to the ECCI and helping coordinate between the sections and the ECCI. By 1924, the mandates for ECCI reps were increased; they were now responsible solely to the ECCI and were to supervise the execution of decisions of the ECCI.

We know from Cannon's *First Ten Years of American Communism* about the role that John Pepper played in the American section of the Communist International. Despite his very unclear mandate from the ECCI, he helped drive into factional frenzy an already faction-ridden Communist Party. Cannon called him an "artificial factor." Pepper was followed by one Gusev—who did have a clear mandate from the ECCI—who proceeded to play with the concept of proportional representation so that the Ruthenberg faction, which was deemed "more loyal to the Communist International," ended up with a majority in the American party. The conception of an ECCI representative is a reasonable one, but in the hands of Zinoviev, the representatives were no longer responsible to the ECCI as a whole but were bureaucratic appendages of Zinoviev himself, and they did significant harm.

In our draft Organizational Rules, we have been careful to specify that representatives from the International Secretariat (I.S.) to the sections must be full members of the IEC, and we spell out that a qualification for membership on the IEC is the ability to go into other sections and locate key problems and report back effectively. That way the significant authority of an I.S. representative is not detached from the IEC, which is answerable to the membership of the sections through the International Conference. In part, the role of the I.S. rep is a concretization of an observation we've often made: the I.S. can destroy a section from a distance but cannot build one from a distance. Building a section requires a struggle for a collective leadership forged through



Panorama

Yakov Sverdlov (at right) with Lenin in 1918. A consummate organizer, Sverdlov was called the "general secretary" of the October insurrection" by Trotsky.

intervention into political arenas on a common political program, through education and example.

To continue the work of the Third International which had been destroyed by Stalin, Trotsky established first the International Left Opposition (ILO), then the International Communist League (Bolshevik-Leninist) and finally in 1938 the Fourth International. The Fourth International was not an International of mass parties like the Comintern and never transcended a propagandistic existence of a thin, partial and scattered vanguard. But Trotsky fought for the concrete application of democratic-centralism in the international tendency and in the fighting propaganda groups that claimed adherence to it.

Some of the problems that Trotsky faced in establishing an International are a good example of why organizational questions are not determinate. The ILO attracted everyone who fell afoul of Stalin's Comintern, some of them quite far from Trotskyism; they agreed with Trotsky on his organizational criticisms of Stalin's regime but not with his political conclusions. Trotsky spent a good part of the rest of his life trying to fight the centrist groupings that were attracted in some way to the Left Opposition's struggle against Stalin.

Trotsky's International Communist League seems to have been just as weak and buffeted by centrist pressures as we are. Meeting after meeting dealt with a political crisis in one section after another: the Germans kept trying to capitulate to a centrist split from the CP; the Spanish did capitulate to the centrists who in turn capitulated to the Catalan nationalists; the Italians had five small groups all claiming to uphold the ILO but incapable of working together; the

Americans declined to participate in international discussion; the French were so racked with personalist infighting that the International Secretariat couldn't even find out what, if any, political differences existed.

As I once told our International Secretary after a particularly trying day, we seem to have three advantages over Trotsky's ICL: We don't have two sections operating under fascist governments; our sections agree to, are capable of and usually remember to uphold their financial obligations; and we don't have sections whose sole point of unanimity seemed to be to blame it all on the I.S.

We also have another enormous advantage over Trotsky's International: financial stability. In Trotsky's lifetime, he had to rely on his author's royalties, which were few and uncertain. The American section struggled with extreme poverty; Cannon describes the enormous efforts to scrape together enough money to put out the *Militant*. One consequence was that the Trotskyists in Latin America and Southeast Asia had hardly any contact with the I.S. or benefit of the guidance of the European comrades. In contrast, our technological and financial resources give us a chance to fight the political pressures to which we are subjected. Comrade Tanner has said, and she is probably right, that our I.S. now is pretty much the kind of body that Trotsky fought to build in the '30s and was unable to achieve.

Factional Struggle and Party Democracy

We claim specific continuity with the Marxist movement through the SWP, the American section of the Fourth International. The SWP was the only section with unbroken links to the development of Trotskyism; Cannon came out of the CPUSA with a good chunk of cadre intact. In Europe, the sections were composed by and large of atomized individuals and World War II destroyed what cohesiveness had developed in Trotsky's lifetime.

The SWP's formal organizational rules are very similar to ours. While the SWP adopted new statutes periodically, they actually didn't change much from the founding conference in 1938. At key junctures the SWP passed organizational resolutions: in 1940 after the fight with the Shachtmanites, in 1953 after the Cochran-Clarke fight, and then in 1965 after the expulsion of the Revolutionary Tendency (RT).

An organization's rules cannot be separated out from its organizational resolutions, which show the purpose and practice of the party. The 1965 Organizational Resolution is a perfect example of organizational rules as "handmaidens of purpose," because the purpose of the SWP had changed by the early '60s and their earlier Leninist organizational practice was changed to reflect that. The RT sought to combat the degeneration of the SWP, which fundamentally no longer wanted to make a revolution. At the time, the SWP had a democratic-centralist structure; in practice (although it was not specified in the rules) it had a set of provisions for groups carrying out factional struggle within the party.

The RT's fight impelled the revisionist Majority to bring its organizational structure into line with its rightward-moving political program. The RT was expelled under the following syllogism: factions are permitted in the SWP; factionalists are disloyal people; disloyal people are expelled. While adhering formally to democratic-centralism, the SWP's 1965 resolution, "The Organizational Character of the Socialist Workers Party," formalizing the expulsion of the RT for its politics, provided the basis for the subsequent elimination of all factions.

Trotsky in exile in Prinkipo, Turkey in early 1931. Today the ICL possesses financial resources and modern technology which the Trotskyists of Trotsky's time lacked. This aids us as we struggle to build a politically cohesive, democratic-centralist international party.



Institute for Social History, Amsterdam

The question of factional rights is integral to democratic-centralism, and our organizational rules are unique in spelling out these rights. In determining the contents of pre-conference bulletins, we take into consideration the proportional weight of a faction and their right to circulate their documents to the membership. Our conference calls provide for the election of delegates to the International Conference on a proportional basis, including the right of minorities in different sections to amalgamate their votes to garner sufficient strength to elect a delegate. Factions have the right to circulate correspondence within the faction and not have it turned over to the party as a whole, not even upon the demand of a Control Commission. And we make provision for proportional representation by factions on the IEC and the I.S.

Even our definition of membership contains a basic statement of factional rights. Article III.1 states, "A member of the ICL must *agree* with its Statement of Purpose and *accept* its program...." We make a distinction between our purpose, or principles, which is fundamental, and our program, which seeks to realize our principles. Of course, there is overlap between them. The distinction comes down to this: The common purpose of the organization is to seek communism through proletarian, revolutionary and internationalist means. But the programmatic expression of those principles is subject to debate and discussion. When the objective situation takes a turn, we might formulate our principles in different programmatic terms.

It's exactly when the objective situation makes a turn that a revolutionary organization tends to polarize, that factions arise under pressure of the objective situation. Sometimes factions are capitulating to external pressures; they become revisionist, like the Nordenites, who lost confidence in the ability of the party to affect the consciousness of the masses, which has been thrown back as a result of the collapse of the Soviet Union. Sometimes factions arise to fight the revisionism of the party majority; such was the case with the SL's predecessor, the Revolutionary Tendency. The isolation of the SWP from an International which could counter the pressures of the seeming triumph of guerrillaism in Cuba and black nationalism in the U.S. led the SWP onto a centrist course, which the RT fought against.

The SWP also had an organizational practice—which was

never codified in a rule—which we reject. Members of the SWP's leading bodies, the National Committee and the Political Committee, were under a separate discipline; that is, matters discussed within these bodies were not to be disclosed to the membership. This destructive policy went back to the Communist Party. As an example of what this policy led to in the SWP, in 1962 Tim Wohlforth, then an oppositionist, wrote a document which he got lots of members, both on and off the National Committee, to sign. The response of Farrell Dobbs, the SWP National Secretary at the time, was one of fury at Wohlforth's breach of procedure rather than dealing with the content of the document. In Article VI.6 of our draft Rules, we state:

"There is no special discipline of higher bodies separating them from or counterposing them to other members of the ICL. While it is preferable, for example, that the IEC have an opportunity to discuss new questions first, members of the IEC are not prohibited from discussing disputed political questions with other party members or communicating such information to them."

ICL Rules and Guidelines

Until this International Conference, our international tendency was guided in its organizational practice by the SL/U.S. Organizational Rules and Guidelines. Originally adopted as provisional in 1969, these were the first rules of our organization, and we didn't know how the rules as written would work out in practice. At the Eighth National Conference of the SL/U.S. in 1987, we finally dropped the "provisional." There have been several amendments approved by subsequent conferences and Central Committee meetings in the last ten years.

The ICL has not faced many different challenges, such as having to work outside a bourgeois-democratic framework, nor do we have much experience in applying our rules in economically backward countries. However, we have had many years of practice based on the SL/U.S. rules. Obviously, international rules are necessarily more algebraic than sectional rules; one should not expect to find the level of detail one is used to seeing in the SL/U.S. rules. But in a sense, the draft International Rules are not "new"; they are a codification of accepted organizational practice. Noting that they can and certainly will be modified over time, we recommend that the conference adopt the draft International Rules. ■

Organizational Rules and Guidelines

International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist)

The following Organizational Rules and Guidelines flow integrally from our revolutionary program as set forth in the International Communist League's "Declaration of Principles and Some Elements of Program."

The Organizational Rules are a guide to the conduct of a democratic-centralist party. They are neither a talisman against programmatic departures nor an immutable set of principles; rather, they exist for the purpose of conducting the affairs of revolutionary Marxists seeking the best way to function under constantly varying circumstances. The Organizational Rules are handmaidens of our purpose, the historically evolved codification of our intent.

The international Spartacist tendency, predecessor to the International Communist League, was established on a formal basis in 1974 with the Declaration for the Organizing of an International Trotskyist Tendency. An internal appendix to that document, which established an International Executive Committee and a resident International Secretariat, provided an embryonic framework for the organization of the tendency. However, the operational international rules for the ICL have de facto been the Organizational Rules and Guidelines of the Spartacist League/U.S. Our reliance on the SL/U.S. Rules is itself an outcome of the historical vicissitudes of the Trotskyist movement, which resulted in the stability and relative strength of the American section.

The International Organizational Rules and Guidelines are based on the best standard practice and historical precedents, qualified to the extent of their particular relevance, of the Communist (Leninist) and Trotskyist movements, and by the experience of the Spartacist tendency since its inception in November 1962 (see Appendix A).

Given the flux of the revolutionary movement and in particular the ICL's limited international scope and experience to date, these rules will necessarily be subject to future revision and development to reflect the living reality of an organization with new demands and new problems.

Within the framework of the International Rules and Guidelines, each individual section of the ICL must adopt its own rules, reducing the historical and algebraic generalizations herein to specific, arithmetical applications for each country.

Article I. Name

The name of the organization is the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist), hereinafter referred to as the ICL.

Article II. Statement of Purpose

The purpose of the ICL is to achieve communism over the whole of the earth by class-struggle centered means that are at once proletarian, revolutionary and internationalist, as defined by the ICL's "Declaration of Principles and Some Elements of Program" (1998). We stand in the tradition of

our international political forebears, foremost Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky.

Article III. Membership

1. A member of the ICL must agree with its Statement of Purpose and accept its program, decisions and rules, belong to and personally participate in one of the party organizations, and pay a sustaining pledge according to a progressive taxation schedule set by the section.

2. To be a member of a section of the ICL, a comrade must either speak or be actively studying the appropriate language of the country in which that section is located.

3. International "member-at-large" status is anomalous and can exist only at the direction of the I.S. Such individuals will be responsible to the I.S. for the conduct of their political work.

4. Members will carry out the program and policies of the ICL in all aspects of their public political life. Substantial material support to cults, religions or comparable fads, or proselytizing for them, is incompatible with ICL membership. Members will not in their personal appearance, habits, conduct or lifestyles be either a serious or chronic detriment to the ICL.

Article IV. National Sections

1. National sections of the ICL are established on the norm of one section, one state power. Where existing state borders cut across the body of a nation, we may make other provisions. (For example, when Germany was divided between the capitalist West and the deformed workers state in the East, we consciously named our section in West Germany and West Berlin the Trotskyist League of Germany, reflecting our programmatic call for the revolutionary reunification of Germany.) Sections must agree with the ICL's Declaration of Principles and implement its program, decisions and rules. Sections must be organized on the basis of democratic-centralism.

2. Sections are required to observe the decisions and resolutions of the International Conference, and, in between conferences, of the International Executive Committee (IEC). Sections must comply with the initiatives of the International Secretariat (I.S.) or bring their objections to the IEC. Sections retain the right of appeal to the IEC and the International Conference, whose decision will be final.

3. Sections may be admitted to or expelled from the ICL only by the International Conference, or by decision of the IEC to be submitted to the ratification of the next International Conference.

4. A section must show the capacity to generate propaganda, to carry out its financial obligations, to recruit, and to effectively consult with the I.S.

5. A newly affiliated section whose capacities have been

insufficiently tested may be taken in as a sympathizing section. A sympathizing section may not produce public propaganda or implement political or organizational decisions without the prior authorization of the I.S. In all other ways it has the same rights and responsibilities as a full section.

6. Where an existing section has shown a fundamental incapacity to meet the basic requirements of an ICL section, the section may be put into receivership to the I.S., which means that it has the same status as a sympathizing section.

7. Change in status of a section may be made by the International Conference, or, in intervals between conferences, the IEC.

8. The name of a section and its press is subject to consultation and review by the International Conference, or, in intervals between conferences, the IEC.

9. Every section must pay a regular (monthly) sustaining pledge to the ICL. The amount of this pledge will be determined by the I.S. and will be based upon a percentage of each section's income from its own sustaining pledge. A section's special, non-regular income will also be sent to the I.S. Every section must develop a set of financial rules and regulations consistent with these guidelines, appropriate to its circumstances and in consultation with the I.S. Every section must maintain scrupulously accurate records and transmit regular reports to the I.S. Sections will maintain complete financial independence from the state.

Article V. International Conference

1. The highest expression of the political and organizational will of the ICL is the International Conference, which determines the policy of the International and of its sections in all the important political questions, adopts resolutions, and is final recourse regarding organizational questions and internal conflicts.

2. The International Conference will be called by the IEC, as a norm every two years. Any departure must be justified by the IEC in writing. The International Conference may also be initiated upon the demand of sections representing at least one-third of the membership of the ICL. The IEC will be responsible for the organizational and technical aspects of any International Conference.

3. The period of organized pre-conference discussion for an IEC-called conference is defined by issuance of the conference call, which will contain or be accompanied by a statement or documents setting forth the main substance proposed for conference discussion and decision, as well as organizational provisions (delegate ratio, locale, etc.). In convening an International Conference, the IEC will be guided by preceding practice as documented by past conference calls, modified by the requirements of the current situation (see Appendix B, "Call for the Third International Conference of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist)," 4 October 1997).

4. Regularly called International Conferences will normally be preceded by a 90-day discussion period. More frequent or urgent International Conferences may have to have a reduced pre-conference discussion period. The I.S. may set a deadline for acceptance of pre-conference discussion articles for the *International Internal Bulletin*.

5. The I.S. will levy a compulsory membership assessment to help finance the International Conference.

6. The delegate and representational procedures for each International Conference will be set by the IEC.

7. It is impermissible for sections, factions or anyone else to place binding instructions on delegates as to positions or votes to be taken at the International Conference.

Article VI. International Executive Committee

1. The International Executive Committee will be the highest continuing *body* of the ICL. The International Conference, which when in session stands higher, is a specific, discontinuous *event*. The IEC will have final authority between International Conferences over all ICL members, sections, sub-bodies and committees, and over all ICL publications, public or internal. All decisions of the IEC are subject to review and ratification by the International Conference.

2. The IEC will be elected by the International Conference and will consist of such full, alternate and perhaps candidate and consultative members as set by the International Conference. If conflicting political divisions are present, the International Conference, in electing the IEC, will use proportional representation with the limitation that a conference majority is entitled to a minimum of three-fifths of the IEC seats.

3. In no sense is the IEC a federated group of representatives from different sections; rather it is the political body that sits in council on behalf of the international organization between conferences, although representation from throughout the International is desirable.

4. Full members of the IEC must have the proven political capacity to act as representatives of the I.S. in sections other than their own, able to locate key problems and report back effectively. Alternates must show evidence of meeting such qualifications. Full and alternate members of the IEC are at the disposal of the ICL for relocation or other assignments if called upon.

5. The IEC may select from the alternate list to fill vacancies among full members. The IEC may co-opt members to itself in the event its list of alternates is exhausted, or to maintain the proportional political representation established at the preceding conference, or to give political representation to newly joined groups or tendencies, or to otherwise strengthen the ICL.

6. There is no special discipline of higher bodies separating them from or counterposing them to other members of the ICL. While it is preferable, for example, that the IEC have an opportunity to discuss new questions first, members of the IEC are not prohibited from discussing disputed political questions with other party members or communicating such information to them.

7. The IEC will meet at least yearly, or more frequently at politically important conjunctures, and immediately before and after each International Conference. The IEC will be convened by the I.S. or at the demand of a majority of IEC members. Every member of the IEC will be given due notice of the time and place that such a plenum will be held.

8. Meetings of IEC members for which notification to all members has not been given, or which are highly unrepresentative in composition, lack statutory authority and are consultative in character. The results of such discussions,

codified in written form, must be communicated to the appropriate body or bodies, the I.S. or the IEC.

9. The IEC is responsible for the publication of the ICL's theoretical journal in all languages in which it is published, including determination of its frequency and content, and appointment of the editorial boards.

10. The IEC will regulate internal written and oral discussion of conflicting positions in accordance with the principle that a living, continuous internal life is vital to the ICL. Hence any limitations on discussion must be justified in each particular circumstance. Proportional weight must be given to politically representing the views of the minority and the majority in factional struggles.

11. A major limitation often found necessary is that questions fought out and decided by the International Conference may not be immediately thrown open for renewed discussion. With the passage of time and possible new developments around the disputed issue, the IEC may choose to authorize new discussion, moderated, for example, by organizing it in purely literary form and limiting the length of contributions. In any case, all political subjects of interest to the ICL are open during established pre-conference discussion periods.

12. IEC regulation of discussion also requires the technical centralization of written internal discussion, which will take place exclusively in bulletins and mailings for which the IEC has given prior authorization. Declared tendencies or factions have the right to circulate material within the faction.

13. The IEC has the authority to establish or break fraternal relations and to carry out or ratify fusions with other political organizations based on our political program.

14. The IEC is directly responsible for the political and organizational initiatives of the ICL where no section exists. Specifically, the IEC may assign personnel for the purpose of establishing a presence in a country where no section exists. Such a station does not have the formal rights of a section.

15. The IEC will elect the International Secretariat, normally from among its full members, and its secretary, and may elect such other officers and establish such other sub-bodies and commissions as it deems necessary.

Article VII. International Secretariat

1. The I.S. is a resident body and will act on behalf of the IEC between its meetings in conducting the day-to-day administrative and political work as well as maintaining regular liaison with the sections. All decisions of the I.S. are subject to review and ratification by the IEC and the International Conference.

2. The International Secretariat is the continuing executive arm of the IEC. In order to ensure its executive function, the composition of the I.S. should both express the will of the majority of the IEC and have present within it any substantial minority views found within the IEC.

3. The I.S. will determine the expenditure of the financial resources of the ICL, based on agreed political priorities of the tendency as a whole.

4. The I.S. will be responsible for providing all ICL literature to sections and groups at no charge. All proceeds from the sales of ICL literature must be sent to the I.S.

5. The I.S. will meet as necessary and will send minutes of its meetings to all IEC members.

Article VIII. Relations Between the IEC/I.S. and the Sections

1. The I.S. cannot substitute for the ongoing work of constructing a section. While the I.S. can intervene from afar to stop errant political activity, the painstaking, day-to-day work must be conducted by the sections themselves.

2. The I.S. may assign representatives to sections on an ongoing basis, who may have full votes on the section's Central Committee (and consultative votes in other bodies). Such a representative must be a full IEC member.

3. The I.S. may also delegate one or more representatives to visit a section for a specific purpose. If such a person is to have the full authority of an I.S. representative, he must be a full IEC member. Such a delegation would cast consultative vote(s) in any meeting of the section it attends. If the delegation is assigned to a section where there is also an ongoing I.S. representative, the I.S. will determine whether the delegation will cast the full CC vote of the I.S. representative or whether it will cast consultative votes. If the delegation is to cast the full CC vote, the I.S. will determine the manner in which that vote will be divided among the delegation members.

4. Full and alternate IEC members will have the right of access to any party body in any section, excluding certain central party bodies under special circumstances.

5. Sections are mandated to send to the I.S. minutes of higher bodies and regular, synthetic reports of their work.

Article IX. Relations Between Sections

1. While the ICL encourages the maximum lateral international contact and collaboration among members, communications between sectional bodies and members on operational political and organizational work of the sections must be centralized through the I.S.

2. Under exceptional circumstances, the National Conference of one section may elect a member of another section to serve on a central body. Such a person has the same rights as any other member on that body, but no other membership rights in the section.

3. Members in good standing have the right to transfer from one section of the ICL to another section upon written notification to the centers of the sections involved and upon consent of the I.S.

4. Members who have resigned from or been expelled by one section of the ICL may not be readmitted to another section without the approval of the I.S.

Article X. International Control Commission

1. The International Conference may elect an International Control Commission (ICC) with the full authority to investigate disputes between sections, situations involving individuals or circumstances in more than one section, or at the direction of the IEC. It may initiate any investigation it deems necessary, must undertake an investigation requested by the I.S. and will be responsible for periodic financial audits of the I.S. and of national sections. The ICC will report its findings to the IEC or the I.S. for action. The ICC has the power to delegate any of its authority to

representatives. The authority of the ICC will supersede any sectional or local investigation or trial.

2. The ICC will consist of not less than three members as follows: the International Conference will elect an even number of members and the IEC will designate one member, who will be a member of the IEC. Members of the ICC have the same rights of access to any party body as alternate members of the IEC.

3. It is obligatory on every member of the ICL to furnish the ICC, or its authorized representatives, any information they may require, other than material exchanged within a tendency or faction, or personal material exchanged entirely privately between two individual members of the ICL.

4. In the absence of an elected ICC, the IEC may appoint a commission as needed for particular situations. Such an ad hoc commission will be invested with the same authority as an elected ICC.

Article XI. Discipline

1. The IEC has the right, after consultation with the interested section, to pronounce the expulsion of individual members of the ICL. Expelled members retain the right of appeal before the next International Conference.

2. Any section or body, or any member of any section or body, may bring charges against another member for violation of the program, decisions or rules of the ICL. When the charges involve individuals or circumstances in more than one section or when the IEC otherwise claims jurisdiction, the following rules will apply:

a. The IEC may constitute itself as a trial body or may appoint or designate another body to act under its authority. Such a body will make recommendations to the IEC for action.

b. Charges must be presented in writing.

c. Charges may be dismissed at any time by the IEC.

d. No body will meet as a trial committee unless all members have been informed in advance of the business at hand. The accused must be given notice of the trial date and a copy of the charges at least seven days preceding a trial. Failure to appear or send a letter of defense will be grounds for conducting the trial in absentia.

e. Should the accused be found guilty, the disciplinary measures which are normally available are, in increasing order of severity: censure, reduction to candidacy, suspension and expulsion.

f. The accused or accuser may appeal the decision or the severity of discipline to the next International Conference, whose decision will be final. In the meantime, pending appeal, the current decision remains in force. An appeal must be filed within 15 days of the action being appealed.

g. In some circumstances trials are pointless, irrelevant or dangerous. Such cases may include those where the accused admits the accusation, where the accused has resigned from the international tendency, where the accusation involves crimes according to bourgeois legality or where attempted penetration by class enemies is involved. In such cases other means than a formal trial should be employed.

3. Political collaboration with non-members of the ICL must be formally authorized by the party organization having jurisdiction.

Article XII. Miscellaneous

1. Additional regulations that fall within but are not spelled out by the ICL Organizational Rules may be made by the IEC. Necessary modifications of the ICL Organizational Rules may be made by the IEC in order to protect the security and functioning of the ICL under different or altered circumstances. Otherwise amendments to these rules may be made only by the International Conference.

2. Sections must adopt their own rules and guidelines, drawing upon the appropriate elements of the ICL rules and those of other sections. These rules must be in consonance with the ICL rules.

3. At all meetings of the ICL, the proceedings will be governed by *Robert's Rules of Order (Revised)*, except where they are in conflict with the ICL rules.

4. All decisions of the ICL will be by simple majority vote. No second will be required for motions in any body of the ICL. The chairman of all meetings and committees has a right to voice and vote. The nay vote will be taken first in calling the question (i.e., to end a discussion and proceed to a vote). Motions presented by an individual comrade become the property of the body.

5. All elections to party bodies will be voted by secret ballot, unless a motion to vote by acclamation passes unanimously. A nominee to a party body who declines the nomination may be renominated and must then accept.

Appendix A

Party Precedents

The application of our Organizational Rules and Guidelines will be guided by prior experience. This Appendix explains some of our recognized precedents which have bearing on party functioning, both negative and positive, especially in resolving internal disputes and conflicts.

In drawing on different precedents, we acknowledge a specific hierarchy for the rules of association and administration. While we consider relevant earlier models of justice, the content of our functioning is related to bourgeois law as matter is to antimatter. As is the case in bourgeois law, we take into account historical sources such as the Code of Hammurabi, upon which the ancient Babylonian empire was based, and the English Renaissance plays of William Shakespeare. However, we give greater weight to criteria developed closer in time. Most importantly, party functioning is guided primarily by political judgment, not juridical procedures abstracted from their social content.¹

As an example, we recognize the importance of Norman law but find ourselves closer to the serfs' perspective than to that of William the Conqueror in his invasion of England in 1066. Moreover, while the class struggle has endured for a long time, capitalism has created an industrial working class, opening the way for the exploited class to take

¹See, for example, Harold Laski, *The State in Theory and Practice* (1935) and Charles Rembar, *The Law of the Land: The Evolution of Our Legal System* (1980).

command of society as a whole. The functioning of the Leninist party as the instrument of proletarian revolution has evolved historically and socially beyond the codes reflecting William's dealing with the serfs or the serfs' appealing to his dubious better nature.

We draw most specifically on the practice of our Marxist predecessors, whose continuity dates back to the 1848 Revolutions when the world was revealed in its essential current form. We place particular weight on the more recent experience of the Third and Fourth Internationals. The Communist International codified the Bolsheviks' struggle against reformism and for a centralized vanguard party giving expression to the weight of the proletariat. The International Left Opposition and the Fourth International in Trotsky's time fought the Stalinist degeneration of the Communist International and struggled for the concrete application of democratic-centralism, although it never transcended the propagandistic existence of a thin, partial and scattered vanguard.

The Revolutionary Tendency (RT) within the Socialist Workers Party provided the continuity which links the program and practice of Lenin and Trotsky's Internationals to the current International Communist League. We date the inception of the Spartacist tendency to November 1962, when Gerry Healy engineered an unprincipled split in the RT. Much of the practice of the ICL is based on the experience of the RT in its attempts to combat the degeneration of the once-revolutionary SWP into centrism (and rapidly thereafter into reformism). This practice is codified in the Organizational Rules and Guidelines of the SL/U.S., first adopted as provisional at the Second National Conference in August 1969 and extended and amended up to the present, which have guided the functioning of the ICL in the absence of International Organizational Rules.

The most relevant precedent is thus those decisions arrived at under the existing statutes. Such case law has been developed particularly through instances of party jurisprudence,

most notably in the international trials of Bill Logan (August 1979) and John Sharpe (October 1982). Among other precedents, these trials established the need for a decisive, active trial body which centralizes and subordinates to itself the other agencies and individuals involved. The expulsion of Linda T. in the SL/U.S. (October 1982) and the improper investigation and expulsion of Ralf Eades in the Spartacist League/Britain (June 1983), both overturned after appeals resulting in further investigation, are striking examples of the misapplication of existing statutes and the ability of the party to make and to rectify mistakes.

* * *

Precedents are drawn from experience which can be equivocal, positive or negative. An example of the first is the fight within the First International—which was an inclusive organization combining both trade-union formations and diverse political tendencies—between the Marxists and anarchists. While we embrace the political principles of the Marxist wing, Marx's expulsion of Bakunin for financial malfeasance before conducting the discussion on the substantial political differences between the two wings placed organizational measures before political clarification and is not a practice we seek to emulate.

Lenin's struggle to build the Third International stands out as a positive example. Thus, we uphold as a model the "Conditions of Admission to the Communist International" approved by the Second Congress of the Communist International (1920) and the "Guidelines of the Organizational Structure of Communist Parties, on the Methods and Content of Their Work" adopted at the Third Congress (1921) which, as we noted in our introduction in *Prometheus Research Series* No. 1, "is one of the great documents of the international communist movement, standing as the codification of communist organizational practice as it was forged by the Bolsheviks and tested in the light of the world's first successful proletarian revolution."

Prometheus Research Series

Published by the Prometheus Research Library

No. 1: Guidelines on the Organizational Structure of Communist Parties, on the Methods and Content of Their Work

Complete and accurate English translation of 1921 Comintern Resolution from final German text. Includes, for the first time in English, the reports on and discussion of the Resolution at the Third Congress. With introduction by Prometheus Research Library staff.

\$6 (includes postage) 94 pages

No. 2: Documents on the "Proletarian Military Policy"

Includes rare materials from the Trotskyist movement in the U.S. and Europe during World War II, as well as an analytical introduction by the International Executive Committee of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).

\$9 (includes postage) 102 pages

No. 3: In Memoriam, Richard S. Fraser: An Appreciation and Selection of His Work

A memorial to comrade Richard S. Fraser (1913-1988), who pioneered the Trotskyist understanding of black oppression in the United States, fighting for the perspective of Revolutionary Integration.

\$7 (includes postage) 110 pages

No. 4: Yugoslavia, East Europe and the Fourth International: The Evolution of Pablist Liquidationism

Covers the internal discussion within the Fourth International over its flawed response to the Yugoslav Revolution and the 1948 Tito-Stalin split and includes rare documents from the period.

\$7 (includes postage) 70 pages

Order from/make checks payable to: Spartacist Publishing Co., Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116, USA

One of the striking features of the Spartacist tendency from its inception has been the explicit recognition of the right of factional division within the organization. Our practice in this regard comes largely from the negative example of the experiences of the RT within the SWP. In abiding by the formal organizational rules of the SWP, the RT impelled the revisionist Majority to bring the SWP rules into line with its rightward-moving political practices. Thus the RT was expelled under the following syllogism: (1) factions are permitted in the SWP; (2) factionalists are disloyal people; (3) disloyal people are expelled. The SWP's 1965 resolution, "The Organizational Character of the Socialist Workers Party," authorized in the same motion as the RT's expulsion and written as an explicit justification for it, provided the basis for the subsequent elimination of all factions.

* * *

As a general conception, our party's juridical codes and procedures are based on Roman law, a written code of statutes and principles as enforced by a political authority, rather than English Common Law based on legal custom established through court decisions. It is necessary to note, however, that our rules are not a penal code but the civil rules of a private association.

In the conduct of our meetings, the ICL follows *Robert's Rules of Order* as the best codification of parliamentary procedure in formal deliberations of private associations. We acknowledge the limitations of *Robert's Rules*, authored in 1876 by a U.S. Army officer who was inspired by earlier experiences conducting church meetings while stationed in New Bedford, Massachusetts. *Robert's Rules* systematizes the parliamentary practices of the revolutionary bourgeoisie growing out of the institutions created by the English Commonwealth, the American Revolution and the American Civil War, particularly as concretized in the House of Representatives after the capitalist North defeated the Confederacy and eliminated legal slavery in the United States. We

seek to transform these limits through interpretation in the spirit of Jacob Sverdlov, the Bolshevik organizer known for his skill at chairing meetings.

Appendix B

The conduct of the International Conference is based on the norms codified in our Organizational Rules and Guidelines. The specific procedures vary with the needs of the International Communist League at different times and are thus not delineated in the Rules.

The Call for the Third International Conference of the ICL establishes the practice deemed most efficient and most democratic in 1997 for discussion and debate within the International. Future conferences should be guided by this Call as modified by the requirements at the time. Note in particular the section entitled "Guidelines for Delegate Elections," which outlines some considerations on election procedures that have come up in the Marxist movement, including some negative examples.

Call for the Third International Conference of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist)

4 October 1997

To All Sections and Members of the ICL:

In accordance with a motion passed by the International Secretariat on 21 March 1997, the I.S. hereby calls the third decisive International Conference of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist). The conference will be preceded by a meeting of the outgoing IEC and followed by a meeting of the newly elected IEC.

The ICL exists today in a new period in world history, one conditioned by colossal defeats for the proletariat with capitalist counterrevolution in the former Soviet Union and across East Europe. Heightened interimperialist rivalries and an intensification of racial and anti-immigrant oppression and exploitation of labor have also engendered powerful defensive struggles by the proletariat and created a tinderbox of discontent among oppressed sectors and leftist youth. But 80 years after the October Revolution, the gains of which were finally undone by Stalinism, the political consciousness of the proletariat internationally has been *thrown back*. As Trotskyists who fight internationally for new October Revolutions, we are placed in a fragile and challenging situation by this conjuncture.

The struggle toward new Octobers has two main bases. One is the necessity to maintain the programmatic integrity of the party against internal and external challenges. The second is the necessity to find support for the revolutionary program in sections of the proletariat. This applies not only to where we have existing national sections, but must also be a factor in guiding our efforts to extend the communist presence to other areas of the world. As we have noted, the ideological impact of the bourgeoisie's trumpeting of the "death of communism" is uneven throughout the world, and our own opportunities for growth are not uniform.

Significant shifts in cadre resources have been made since the 1992 International Conference. We withdrew, bitterly

Available in Chinese

Declaration of Principles adopted by September 1966 founding conference of the Spartacist League/U.S. now available in Chinese/English edition.

\$1 (10 pages)

Make checks payable/mail to:
Spartacist Publishing Co.
Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116, USA



and hopefully temporarily, from the former Soviet Union. We have extended our presence to South Africa, including the important recruitment of proletarian cadre to our party. Shifts in capital and the concentration of a relatively new and combative proletariat in Southeast Asia have extended the struggle between labor and capital to hitherto unlikely regions. Given the urgent need to reinforce our Australian section, in a state of near collapse at the top, the IEC consciously decided to shift significant cadre resources to Australia in order to maintain a base from which to work Asia. The ICL has limited resources, human and material. The struggle to extend our communist presence, while shaped by circumstance or even accident, must depend primarily on calculation—fundamentally the weight and viability of the proletariat in a region, conditioned by our access and opportunity. A political assessment of where opportunities—which are always transient—presently exist and how the ICL can best intersect them is among the issues to take up at the Third International Conference.

The next period will likely see the breakdown and terminal crisis of Stalinist rule in China. The core of the thoroughly corrupt Chinese Stalinist bureaucracy has opted for capitalist restoration, reaffirmed most recently by the decision of the September 1997 CCP national congress to privatize large state-owned industry. But such a transformation, which would amount to liquidating what remains of the planned economy, cannot be carried out without breaking the resistance of the increasingly militant Chinese working class. Posed pointblank are the alternatives of proletarian political revolution or capitalist counterrevolution. The answer to the question “whither China?” will redefine the world we live in.

The translation of the SL/U.S. Declaration of Principles into Chinese and the current issue of *Spartacist*, centered on China, give us some important tools of intervention, including in the Chinese diaspora. Notably, there is also a significant Chinese population elsewhere in Asia. Currently our presence in the region is limited to work in and from Japan and Australia. Serious expansion of our work in the region would likely require the setting up of a station more centrally located to the work and opportunities.

Failure to recognize the period we are in and the necessary relationship of our small revolutionary vanguard to the proletariat, and the absence of the Soviet Union as an active and defining factor in politics, have led to disorientation and fueled appetites to follow alien political programs and forces. These disintegrative pressures bear down particularly heavily on a small Leninist vanguard with limited forces and in the absence of a social base in the proletariat. To thrash out political unclarity and reorient ourselves internationally in this period, a delegated International Conference is not only desirable but necessary.

Recognition of the historical retrogression in the political consciousness of the workers movement and left internationally must inform our propaganda, agitation, polemics against our left opponents and, not least, our efforts at revolutionary regroupment and the individual recruitment of experienced leftist militants. The fact that almost all of the members of the Brazilian LM/LQB had not read Lenin's *State and Revolution* is a warning against assuming a high level of political consciousness and knowledge within a group, even one which superficially appears close to us. Our position and attitude toward such basic questions as religion and the oppression of women is likely to be just as crucial for the growth

and development of the ICL in this period as questions such as the correct application of the united-front tactic or not voting for a popular front or its constituent parties.

Lacking historical precedents as a guide, we need Marxist programmatic clarity as a compass. Internal political debate and struggle has been essential in defending the revolutionary program and hammering out necessary political correctives. The ICL is smaller today than it was at the time of the Second International Conference five years ago, mainly due to the attrition of experienced cadre who felt used up and without hope. The national narrowness, pessimistic impressionism and adaptation to bourgeois society implicit in these defections was rendered politically conscious and fought out in two factional challenges to our purpose and program since the previous International Conference. These well-prepared, well-documented political fights—first the declared factional challenge by Y. Rad and Hayes, then the underground machinations and centrist adaptations of the Norden group—stepped our cadre against the pressures of this political period.

The impact of these same pressures on opponent tendencies in the workers movement is evidenced by the outright disappearance of some of our competitors, a new wave of Pabloite entrism in larger reformist formations by pretenders to Trotskyism and a frenzied “regroupment” of centrists. The fluidity on the left today presents opportunities for the ICL, not least in areas of the globe to which we have not yet extended our presence. Our principled break in fraternal relations with the ingrained trade-union opportunists of the Brazilian LQB (now allied with Norden's “Internationalist Group”) was a necessary step in the struggle to forge Trotskyist parties in South America. Nothing would be more fatal than false unity with centrists. Notably, our work in the region and polemics and contact with opponent tendencies from the region have increased since the break in fraternal relations and our publication of a trilingual bulletin on the struggle to forge a Trotskyist party in Brazil.

The I.S. has published a series of internal bulletins (Nos. 32-42) which codify our response to challenges to our program, internal and external.

A significant focal point of the upcoming International Conference will be adopting an international declaration of principles and international organizational rules. The SL/U.S. Declaration of Principles stands the test of time well. However, it is anomalous for an international organization to utilize the statement of principles and organizational rules of one national section.

An international declaration of principles should include the Trotskyist program of permanent revolution, which applies to countries of belated capitalist development. It should contain a section on the Leninist understanding of the national question, as opposed to dealing only with the black question as it pertains uniquely to American society. In addition, the international declaration of principles will deal with our unique international intervention in opposition to capitalist counterrevolution in the degenerated and deformed workers states and our fight for workers political revolution against the Stalinist bureaucracies, which paved the way for the final undoing of the Russian Revolution.

In order to further comrades' knowledge and to homogenize the political understanding of the ICL membership, the conference is scheduling educationals on such questions as imperialism and “globalization,” the early Comintern experience with the colonial question, and the “anti-imperialist united front” vs. permanent revolution. The impact of Islam

as a political factor in hot spots of the struggle between labor and capital, i.e., within the eastern end of the Islamic belt in countries such as Indonesia, is proposed for discussion prepared by an Islamic Commission to be constituted by the I.S. The impact of Islam as a political factor also contributed to closing ICL perspectives for work in North Africa as discussed in the Algeria Commission at the 1992 Second International Conference of the ICL. The Islamic Commission should address this area too, as well as ways in which our European sections can intersect immigrants from the Arab world, a topic of current debate in the French section.

Other likely commissions to address ongoing work, problems and opportunities would include a Finance Commission and perhaps a Youth Commission. The overriding need to accrue through implantation and recruitment a base of support in the proletariat argues for a Trade Union Commission. A Nominating Commission will also be recommended to the Conference to hear argument and make a slate proposal to the voting conference delegates for elections to a new International Executive Committee.

Preconference Discussion and Bulletins

Preconference discussion formally opens with this call. In addition to the bulletins cited above, the I.S. is currently in the process of producing an internal bulletin on how best to formulate the principle of opposing one's own bourgeoisie, in the context of shifting and heightened interimperialist rivalries. This includes the rich discussion on U.S. military bases in Japan, and discussions over Irish troops in NATO and Italian troops in Albania. An enlarged I.S. meeting projected for November 1997 will discuss a draft international declaration of principles and draft international organizational rules, which will then be promptly published and circulated as a preconference discussion bulletin. The I.S. will circulate contributions for the conference in additional internal bulletins, as needed.

Each national section should draw up a perspectives and tasks document summarizing the section's main problems and opportunities as part of the preparation for the International Conference. In some instances there may be questions that require further discussion, which particular sections may want to refer to the International Conference for resolution. Possible examples include the ongoing debate on the nature of the 1910-1917 Mexican Revolution; communist tactics toward Solidarność in Poland; necessary updating of the "Theses on Ireland." Another is discussion of our position on the national question as applied to the Basque people; our French section currently recognizes self-determination for Basques only in Spain and notably *not* within the French Hexagon. Undoubtedly new disputes will arise and old questions could be raised for review.

Preconference discussion bulletins may be published by and for a particular national section. Such national discussion bulletins are open to all members of that particular section to write on subjects proposed for discussion at the International Conference, or on subjects proposed for the section's national conference or on other questions. However, the International Discussion Bulletin is necessarily not indiscriminately open to contributions from individual members. A faction constituted according to the organizational rules of a section does have a right to publish in the International Discussion Bulletin. Any other contributions will be published in the International Discussion Bulletin at the discretion of the I.S. and in consultation with the

relevant sectional leaderships. The amount of nonfactional material published from any particular section will tend to be *roughly* proportional to that section's size, or to the level of general interest in any particular question in dispute.

The task of translation of all conference materials even into the four major languages of the tendency is unfortunately beyond our technical means at this point. It is the responsibility of the I.S. to ensure that, where necessary, the sections translate this conference call and the draft international declaration of principles and draft international organizational rules. The International Discussion Bulletins will be published in English, which is the closest thing to a *lingua franca* in our tendency.

Every section has some capacity for translation into English and therefore contributions to the International Discussion Bulletins should be translated into English. Both the original and the translation should be conveyed to the I.S. in New York. Where this is not possible, the I.S. cannot guarantee either translation or inclusion in a bulletin, but will at a minimum circulate the document in the original language. In view of these technical limitations, comrades should remember that it is possible to state economically and succinctly the essence of a political position. Such economically presented positions will in general be within the capacity of the I.S. to translate and include in the bulletins. The attendant argumentation may constitute insuperable translation and production difficulties and, in this case, in order to ensure that important questions are thoroughly aired, we will lean very heavily in a compensatory way on verbal proceedings at the conference. A later circular will detail technical requirements for submitting documents.

Guidelines for Delegate Elections

The following uniform rules established by the I.S. in consultation with the IEC will be the guide for electing delegates to the conference and will be common to full and sympathizing sections and groups of the ICL.

Under present conditions, with our sections and sympathizing sections having qualitatively similar membership criteria, delegates are selected on the principle of one comrade/one vote in the section as a whole, with delegates casting votes for the number of members in good standing that they represent.

This was not the practice of the early Comintern, which operated under very different circumstances. The Bolsheviks invited 39 parties, left SP factions, trade unions, etc., to attend the First Congress. Thirty-five delegates representing 19 organizations had full votes. Due to the imperialist blockade, only six delegates came from outside Russia. Subsequent practice, codified at the Fourth Congress, was that the Executive Committee of the C.I. mandated the number of delegates each section or group would have at the world congress. However, the number of votes each delegation cast was decided at the congress itself "in accordance with the membership and the political circumstances of the country" ("Decisions of the Fourth Comintern Congress on the Reorganization of the ECCI and on its Future Activities," December 1922).

Michel Pablo's bureaucratic practice was to designate some countries as "important" (therefore receiving greater weight at conferences) and others "less important" (receiving less weight). This gives the advantage to members of some sections, while depriving members in "less important" sections of a proportion of their vote.

It is particularly important to reiterate that delegates cannot be given binding instructions by sections, factions or anyone else concerning positions or votes at the conference. Delegates have not only the right but the duty to vote differently from the position on which they were elected as delegates, should their individual opinion change in the light of conference discussion. To proceed otherwise would fundamentally undermine the purpose of a conference.

Election of Delegates

Only full party members of sections or groups of the ICL in good standing who have paid the conference assessment may be counted to determine the number of delegates for each section and to cast votes for those delegates. To qualify as a full member, a comrade, if new, must *both* have been admitted to full membership prior to the voting for delegates *and* have been admitted to candidate membership prior to the date of this conference call. Good standing is defined as not being more than one full month in arrears in sustaining pledge, i.e., a member must be fully paid up for the second month prior to that in which voting for delegates takes place. For example, if voting takes place in January, a comrade must have paid his November pledge in full. The number of delegated membership votes allotted to each section at the conference will be determined at the time of voting for political positions and delegates in each section according to the certified number of eligible members.

The conference assessment, based on 10 percent of the sustaining pledge paid by the individual comrade averaged over July, August and September, must be paid in full by the time of voting.

Each section and group must convene a national conference for the selection of delegates, if feasible. If it is not feasible, a plenum of the full Central Committee may be called instead in order to elect delegates. In some unusual circumstances where neither of these is practical, a meeting of the Political Bureau may be convened to elect delegates provided prior exhaustive consultation with the Central Committee has taken place. Prior to delegate selection, the national treasurer must certify the number of comrades in that section who are in good standing and have paid their conference assessment.

In sections where more than one local committee or organizing committee exists and a national conference is not practical, certification of individuals should be done by the local treasurers; by the time of delegate selection, the national treasurer will have tallied the total number of members in good standing reported by the local treasurers. The total number of comrades in the section who are certified in good standing by the treasurer will constitute the basis for the number of delegated membership votes allotted to each section at the International Conference.

Minutes of the meeting at which votes are taken on documents and in which delegates are elected must be taken for presentation to the Credentials Committee at the International Conference. A list of the number of comrades voting for political positions, the delegates elected and the fraction of votes each casts, and the alternates elected, must be drawn up by the organizational secretary, or equivalent, signed by him and presented to the registrar at the International Conference. Unresolved disputes about delegates, the number of members in good standing or other questions, together with full documentation, should be referred to the International Conference for final decision.

The number of delegates for each section will be determined according to the chart below. An important consideration in our determination of the delegate ratios is the relative size of the section. The larger the section, the higher will be the ratio of members to delegates:

Size of Section	Delegate Ratio [members : delegates]
100 or more members	27:2
13 to 99 members	9:2
12 members or fewer	7:2

A single delegate may hold no less than 14/27 and no more than 1 and 13/27 vote.

Where factional divisions exist, delegate election will be governed according to the procedure in the appendix to this call. In the absence of any factional division, voting for delegates will be on the basis of the "Perspectives and Tasks Memorandum" adopted by the International Executive Committee at its authoritative January 1996 meeting. This document retains its utility as a summation of the major problems and opportunities and tasks of the ICL in this period. It should now exist in the main language of every section of the ICL in the final form published and circulated in English in March 1996.

Factional divisions are based on votes for written documents. Only a vote *for* a position defined by an international, national or local *written* document, statement or amendment shall be considered a basis on which to elect delegates to the International Conference. If the position voted for is not the IEC Perspectives and Tasks Memorandum, then the position must be *counterposed* to the IEC memorandum or a part thereof. Negative votes, abstentions, not voting or absence from the meeting do not serve as affirmative positions upon which to elect delegates.

When international delegates are elected at a plenum, or by poll of the CC, instead of a national conference, only the positions of full Central Committee members are decisive in establishing divisions; the Central Committee will then appoint a list of delegates to the International Conference proportionately divided according to the factional divisions indicated by this vote on positions by the full members of the Central Committee. Thus in this situation only factional divisions reflected on the Central Committee will be represented by delegates at the International Conference.

Factional division in selecting delegates must be based upon *counterposing written declarations of position* against one another in voting. After the vote for defining positions, those who voted for each position shall caucus separately to select their delegates. The national conference or plenum as a whole shall certify the results and issue delegates' credentials.

Proxy voting by absent members in the election of delegates is prone to ambiguity or manipulation and should *not* be encouraged. For example, if the member's absence is for reason of work, then evidence that the worker would be fired for the absence from the job should be required to validate a proxy vote. If the comrade claims illness, concrete evidence of incapacitating illness must be presented. Vacations are manifestly voluntary absences.

Comrades who are otherwise qualified to vote, but who are away from their section as a result of a specific working party assignment such as work in a station, may cast a written proxy vote in the last section of which they were or remain members in good standing. They will also be counted as part

of the total membership of their home section. Comrades who have recently moved between sections shall vote, in person or by proxy, in the section in which they were members during the majority of the preconference period. In all cases of votes by proxy, an unambiguous written statement of position must be presented by the absent member.

It should be noted that while the delegate and representational procedures presented here are based on the need for the most efficient and the *most democratic* discussion and debate at this particular conference, these procedures are not in their specific expression norms as such.

Fraternal and Alternate Delegates

The I.S. recommends that the International Conference extend fraternal delegate status (voice and consultative vote) to the members of the outgoing IEC who are not elected as voting delegates. Full delegate status should be sought by members of the IEC in different sections in accordance with widely variant considerations, including possibilities of attendance, financial limitations and especially the availability of comparably qualified comrades other than outgoing IEC members. Given the importance of the matters to be discussed and decided by the conference, the best qualified delegations should be elected from each section. A quite limited number of alternate delegates may also be elected, not more than one for each two delegates and in decreasing proportion as the size of the whole delegation is larger, keeping in mind financial feasibility and the desir-

ability of relatively qualified delegates.

At the conference only regular delegates or seated alternates and fraternal delegates will normally have speaking rights. All delegates with speaking rights will have equal time to speak in the round whatever their status or the weight of their vote. In voting, delegates or their seated alternates will cast decisive votes; fraternal delegates will cast consultative votes. Standard Leninist practice is for sessions on organizational and personnel questions to be closed to all but full, seated alternate and fraternal delegates.

Non-delegate ICL members are invited to attend the conference as visitors. Sympathizers and youth members may be invited to attend the International Conference upon approval of the national center of each section and the I.S. All visitors will pay a conference fee equivalent to US\$10. Attendance by representatives of other tendencies will be handled through the I.S.

Conference Finances

Comrades must understand that with a delegated conference the key is to make sure that the delegates are able to attend. Thus the purpose of the conference assessment is to provide subsidies to the *relatively indigent* delegates as determined by the I.S. Non-delegate visitors without fraternal status or special invitations must pay all their own expenses or else not attend.

International Secretariat
4 October 1997

Factional Division

In a situation where factional division exists, the following general formula is more or less the only way that the vote of every full member of the ICL, down to the smallest fraction specified by the delegate ratios, will count. If one or more comrades in a given section and holding a position commonly with those in other sections do not qualify for even a partial delegate, in this conference a minimum of 14/27, or are otherwise unable to send (all) the delegates they are entitled to, they may assign their membership votes to those in other sections so that their representation may appear at the conference. However, if you as a dissident have support amounting to less than one-half of one weighted delegate vote throughout the entire international organization, you can have no decisive vote at the International Conference.

The Conference Call will specify the ratio of members to each delegate such that m members shall have one delegate vote (this ratio m varies according to the size of the section; m will never be an even number). If delegates at a national conference, with a combined voting strength representing n members of that section, vote for a *written* declaration, counterposed to another such declaration if there is a factional division in the organization, then a certain number of delegates will be elected on the basis of that declaration.

The number of delegates for each declaration is computed as follows: Divide n by m . The result will be $d + x/m$ where d is a whole number and x is a remainder less than m . Note that since the delegate ratio m is not an even number, x/m will always be either more or less than $1/2$, never equal. Delegates from a given national section will not necessarily all cast the same number of votes (see below). A delegate who casts exactly m votes will be said to have a

delegate vote weight of 1.

Where $x/m > 1/2$, an additional delegate casting a vote with the weight of x/m will be elected. When $x/m < 1/2$, the weight of the delegate votes will be distributed as evenly as possible among those delegates representing this position, with full delegates with the highest personal votes (or those selected by other means) having the larger vote weight. Note that in both these cases the actual number of votes cast by a given delegate is determined by multiplying the delegate weight by the delegate ratio m .

Here is an example: Suppose we are dealing with Section Z, which has 23 members in good standing. Assume that all 23 of these members attend a nondelegated national conference, 19 vote for Declaration A, while three vote for counterposed Declaration B, and one comrade abstains. The abstention reduces the effective size of the section, for the purpose of selecting delegates, to 22. According to the formula, for a section with 22 members the delegate ratio $m = 9/2 = 4.5$. Therefore, Section Z is entitled to 5 delegates distributed as follows:

a) The 19 members who vote for Declaration A elect 4 delegates. Two cast votes with a delegate weight of 10/9; two cast votes with a delegate weight of 9/9 or 1. Multiply these by the delegate ratio $m = 4.5$ to calculate the votes cast by each delegate. Thus:

19 divided by 9/2 = 38/9 = 4 2/9.

2 delegates at 10/9 weight x 4.5 = 5 votes cast by each
2 delegates at 9/9 weight x 4.5 = 4.5 votes cast by each

b) The 3 members who voted for Declaration B elect one delegate, with a vote weighted at 6/9. Thus:

3 divided by 9/2 = 6/9.

1 delegate at 6/9 weight x 4.5 = 3 votes cast ■

South Africa...

(continued from page 48)

acted, as we warned it would, as black front men for the white capitalist rulers.

Nowhere is this clearer than in the condition of women in the "new" South Africa. While a February 1997 law legalizing abortion is quite broad on paper, the government won't and can't carry it out. The capitalist class, in general, opposes free access to abortion (except for its own daughters) because it allows women some freedom from total subservience to the family structure. The new law has faced an ideological backlash from the Afrikaner Dutch Reformed church, the Catholic church and traditional tribal leaders.

But the real obstacles to providing access to abortion are the material conditions—no equipment, no facilities, no doctors. Johannesburg Hospital, the most modern hospital in the country's largest city, can only perform 4 out of the 44 abortions requested every day. In the name of eliminating apartheid "double" facilities, formerly segregated hospitals and clinics are being closed down. In the black townships, many clinics consist of trucking containers welded together. In the countryside, there is one doctor for every 10,000 to 30,000 people. Swamped by epidemic levels of tuberculosis and other diseases of poverty, as well as a sharp rise in the incidence of AIDS, overburdened health care workers can barely take care of upper respiratory illnesses and paraffin fuel poisoning from dangerous primitive stoves. Only a revolutionary overthrow of the existing capitalist system can even *begin* to address the health needs of women and remove this murderous degradation and misery.

Another burning issue is the migrant labor system, which forces families to separate, so men working in the cities take city wives and country wives, while men in the rural areas may simply take multiple wives as personal slaves and more sources of income. Yet the migrant labor system remains a key underpinning of neo-apartheid capitalism. Mandela cannot dismantle it because these institutions assist in making labor-intensive gold mining so profitable for the imperialists. Today, some ANCers sit on the boards of directors of these companies. A revolutionary vanguard party would expropriate the mine owners and industrialists without compensation.

The growing discontent of the masses, including women workers, is evident in South Africa. One of the first strikes to challenge the ANC-led government was a strike of nurses in September-October 1995, and it was also one of the first to be smashed (see "Mandela Regime Cracks Down on Black Labor," *Workers Vanguard* No. 637, 19 January 1996). The nurses denounced Mandela as the "driver of the gravy train." The "gravy train" is the shorthand derogatory name for the thin layer of blacks who have made it in the "new" South Africa. The nurses were abandoned by the SACP and the COSATU bureaucrats, who called the strike "counter-revolutionary." In the aftermath of the strike, 60,000 nurses



Government fired 60,000 nurses after September 1995 wildcat in which strikers carried signs reading "Away with Mandela." Below: desperately understaffed and underfunded clinics are incapable of providing decent health care for black masses.

Spartacist

Gisèle Wulfsohn/Impact Visuals



were fired in the Eastern Cape, where the local government was headed by the SACP. This is the strikebreaking face of nationalism. More recently, COSATU has postponed and canceled protests to demand family leave and childcare provisions which it supports on paper.

The Spartacist group of South Africa, section of the International Communist League, seeks to forge the Bolshevik workers party which is desperately needed there. We fight for a black-centered workers government that would take power from the "Randlords" in Johannesburg and Cape Town and their imperialist backers in the City of London and Wall Street. Only then will there be genuine national and social liberation for the black majority, and democratic rights for coloureds, Indians and other Asians as well as those whites who would accept a government centered on the black working class.

Combined and Uneven Development

To provide a theoretical cover for its participation in the strikebreaking capitalist government of the racist South African rulers, the reformist SACP preaches the Menshevik

program of “two-stage revolution”—“democratic” capitalism today and socialism some time in a future that never comes. This program has historically been a recipe for bloody defeats. What two-stage revolution has meant from China in 1925 to Indonesia in 1965 and Chile in 1973 is the mass murder of communists and workers.

If there were ever a country crying out for socialist revolution, South Africa is it. The black masses have suffered decades of apartheid terror and murder, and continue to be ground down by the industrial and mining magnates, the Randlords, and by the Wall Street and City of London financiers, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. The intense contradictions of South Africa exemplify what Leon Trotsky called “combined and uneven development.” Everywhere you see aspects of advanced capitalism side by side with abysmal backwardness. This is the country that performed the first heart transplant in 1967. Now the hospital unit where this happened is shutting down for lack of funds, while millions have no access to any health care at all. The militant, unionized black miners extract the gold and precious metals which are traded by the world’s wealthiest people on the capitalist markets, and then these same workers, when they get a day or two off from their murderous labor, return to visit their wives, who mostly live in homes with no electricity or water.

We traveled from the modern, fortress-like white-flight suburbs north of Johannesburg to Soweto, center of anti-apartheid struggle for years, at the far opposite end of the city. Huge mounds of mining waste separate Johannesburg from Soweto. There are miles of identical tiny four-room houses with no indoor plumbing on red dirt streets with no signs and no stores of any kind. On one side of the street, you can see a coloured township; on the other, the black township. Interspersed with what is called “formal housing” is the “informal housing”—huge squatter camps made up of bits and pieces of scrap wood and corrugated metal—whose residents are taxed even for outdoor waterspouts. You can also see the “hostels,” bleak all-male workers’ barracks. Crowds of unemployed youth hang out on the main roads.

As we drove along the highway toward the border of Swaziland in the northeast, we saw squatter huts and lean-tos littering the roadside. One rural youth said to me, “Soweto is as good as it gets for black South Africans.” The white farmers have been expelling black farm laborers en masse, in fear that the government will offer the laborers legal rights to the land they work, and that they will bring their families with them. The dispossessed continue to pour into the cities, as do thousands of others from the impoverished rural areas, driven by illusions that under the ANC there would be jobs and housing. In one squatter town in the West Rand—perched, like a number of others, on dolomitic ground containing massive, dangerous sinkholes—some 80,000 residents are served by seven water taps.

Having undertaken an extension of electrical wiring, the government now considers this effort a big mistake. People can’t afford electrical appliances, can’t repair them and many can’t even read the directions on how to use them. Meanwhile, whole townships have had their electricity cut off for nonpayment—by some of the same people who led the township protests in the 1980s. These cuts have provoked widespread protests, but the government argues that apartheid is over and now you have to pay your bills. The logic of the ANC’s bourgeois-nationalist program requires the repression of struggle to maintain an “investor-friendly

environment” for their imperialist masters.

South Africa confirms in an exceptionally clear way Leon Trotsky’s theory and program of permanent revolution. What we mean by “permanent revolution” was shown by the victorious 1917 Russian workers revolution. In the backward countries in this century, the epoch of imperialist decay, the democratic gains achieved by the earlier European bourgeois revolutions can no longer be carried out by bourgeois nationalists like the ANC, who are weak and dependent on their imperialist masters. Having already divided up the world for exploitation, a handful of the most powerful bourgeoisies economically strangle the masses of the former colonial countries. Neither national independence nor agrarian revolution is possible within the constraints of the capitalist system. Only a socialist revolution, with the proletariat at its head, can begin to liberate the working class, the peasantry and all the oppressed, particularly women. The fight for proletarian power in the backward countries must be linked to a perspective of workers revolution in the imperialist centers.

Under British rule, South Africa’s tribal laws were codified to suit the colonial administrators’ need to control the population in order to allow for profits to be reaped unchallenged. Under apartheid, tribal chiefs like Mangosuthu Buthelezi of the Zulu-based Inkatha—party of the tribal chieftains who continue to hold sway in the old rural areas—were groomed as collaborators and agents of the racist regime. Today, Mandela continues conciliating Buthelezi and Goodwill Zwelithini, who are considered constitutional monarchs in the new nation. In fact, the abortion bill was held back a year so as not to alienate Inkatha, which opposes abortion.

From its inception in 1912, the ANC has always had a nationalist program—albeit with more “socialist” rhetoric when it was in opposition—promoting the false ideology that all people who live within the borders of South Africa have a common interest which stands higher than class divisions. In the “new” South Africa, the tiny white ruling class continues to own 87 percent of the land and 90 percent of the productive wealth. And the ANC is committed to maintaining the capitalist status quo, whose bedrock has always been and *continues to be* the superexploitation of black labor.

For Women’s Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

As Marxists, we understand that the productive forces constitute the skeleton, the economic structure of society. All the legal, political, religious and cultural relations are aspects of the superstructure resting on top of the productive forces. Capitalist exploitation is enforced by the state—an organ of class oppression made up of the cops, the courts, the prisons and the army. Women are specially oppressed through the institution of the family, an economic and social unit which is a mainstay of social reaction along with organized religion. Poor and working-class women are the slaves of the slave and serve the purpose of raising a new generation of exploited toilers.

Far from alleviating the condition of women, the introduction of capitalism by the imperialists led to the perpetuation and reinforcement of the most retrogressive aspects of tribal culture—for example, *lobola*, the bride price. The system of enforced polygamy, an institution for the enslavement of women, is also an example of a barbaric ancient custom—a remnant from an agricultural and slave culture—which was reinforced by apartheid capitalism. The process of inculcating these customs starts early: girls are kidnapped



Rand Daily Mail

Women played heroic role in anti-apartheid struggles: 1957 Johannesburg protest against pass laws (above), 1959 women's demonstration in Cato Manor near Durban subjected to bloody assault by apartheid cops.

Laurie Bloomfield



at a young age and forcibly held in so-called "ritual schools," where older women instruct them in total subservience to men and how to be the bearers of traditional culture to the next generation.

Men purchase wives—who are often still children—traditionally paying for them with livestock, now usually with cash. When the wife bears children, they become the man's property as well; so the woman loses her children if she leaves him. This system—in which women are totally subservient appendages of the male laborer—suits the modern mine and factory owners. And by pitting low-paid women workers against their class brothers, modern capitalism seeks to undermine wage gains achieved through union struggles. This generates hostility against working women. It is no surprise that rape and other violence against women are widespread in South Africa today.

The fate of women and their struggle for full emancipation is tied to the proletarian class struggle against capitalism. We fight to end patriarchal practices oppressive to women, like the polygamy system and the bride price—legacies of social backwardness which are upheld by tribal reactionaries in league with the capitalist rulers. Since the beginning of class society thousands of years ago, the insti-

tution of the family has been the fundamental source of the subjugation of women as dependent domestic slaves. In a socialist planned economy, the family as a social unit will be replaced by socialization of childcare and household duties. Only then can relationships be entered into freely and without economic compulsion.

We champion full equality for women and their full integration into the workforce. We call for equal pay for equal work and free, safe abortion on demand as part of free, quality health care for all. The elimination of women's oppression requires a tremendous leap from the existing material conditions—and this can *only* be achieved through socialist revolution, not only in South Africa but through the creation of an *international planned economy* based on elevating human production for the needs of all. In other words, the liberation of women cannot be carried out apart from the emancipation of the working class as a whole. We seek to build an internationalist revolutionary party, a tribune of all the oppressed, which leads the proletariat in sweeping away the capitalist system worldwide.

From Apartheid Police State to Neo-Apartheid "Democracy"

Those who became politically conscious in the 1990s may not fully appreciate just how grotesque was the racist system which twentieth-century capitalism created in South Africa. Apartheid was not just an extreme case of the sort of Jim Crow segregation seen in the American South. African blacks, who make up about 80 percent of the population, as well as the smaller groups of coloureds and those of East Indian origin, were all made foreigners, pariahs in their own land. Black landowners were evicted from all areas deemed to be "white," i.e., from any piece of land worth anything. Nonwhites had no ownership rights; all movement was controlled by pass laws; intermarriage was forbidden.

Human beings were reduced to "labor units"—that was the term commonly used—and stored in workers' barracks. The Riotous Assemblies Act and the Suppression of Communism Act banned all political activity which created "feelings of hostility between European inhabitants...and the Coloured and Native inhabitants." Violators could be instantly expelled from the district or even the entire country. Many were, and many were simply assassinated by the police.

The Population Registration Act, the Group Areas Act and many other laws were aimed at completely separating the races: 90 percent of coloureds were restricted to the Western Cape and 90 percent of Indians were restricted to Natal in the east. Every urban area had separate enclosed residential sections, whose creation required massive forced population transfers. Any integration and tribal mixing, which was natural in an increasingly urban population, was consciously reversed. Whole towns that had been integrated were leveled. At the museum now, you can see remnants of Cape Town's integrated District 6, which was bulldozed. It was a fact of life to be jailed repeatedly for pass-law violations, and jail often meant torture and death.

The Immorality Act and the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act prohibited all sexual contact between the races. The Abortion and Sterilisation Act of 1975 was aimed at controlling the black population. Women laborers and Soweto schoolgirls were forced to take contraceptive injections, and there were many forced sterilizations and IUD fittings. Meanwhile, back-street abortions killed thousands of black women. Black women could not sign contracts nor inherit any property.

So-called "bantustans" were carved out of the least arable, desolate land where there was no economic means of support. The idea was that men would migrate to the mines, live in barracks, work nearly to death, and then return to their "homeland" when they were no longer productive. Women and children remained in the bantustans hundreds of miles away unless a woman managed to escape—leaving her children behind for other family members to raise—to become a domestic servant for some white family. In the white residential suburbs of Johannesburg, you still see groups of uniformed black maids and nannies sitting on the street curbs during their breaks.

After the 1994 elections, the most liberal bourgeois-democratic constitution in history was penned. Here's a sample quote: "The state may not unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds, including race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth." But these fine words *cannot be carried out* because achieving even these elementary democratic rights requires smashing the rapacious profit system, which has been left untouched. In fact, the constitution is also explicit about defending the right to private property—just in case someone should take the ANC's past socialist rhetoric seriously.

Imperialism and ANC Nationalism

With the exception of the Spartacists, all self-proclaimed socialists in South Africa support, in one form or another, the ANC-led "tripartite" government, a *bourgeois* regime. In the 1994 elections, we opposed a vote to the ANC or any of the other components of the nationalist popular front, calling instead for proletarian class independence. The ANC's "rainbow nation" and "nation-building" rhetoric pro-

vide a cover for continued capitalist immiseration and anti-immigrant terror, as well as for the South African bourgeoisie's regional imperialist aspirations. When the Congo's Laurent Kabila made some noise about a rail nationalization, it was Nelson Mandela himself who intervened to object because the railroad was partly owned by imperialist interests. Thabo Mbeki, who recently replaced Mandela as head of the ANC, wines and dines with billionaire Bill Gates and oversees the capitalist austerity measures that the World Bank demands.

The nationalist ANC defends the same state borders that the British colonialists arbitrarily drew in 1910 for the old Union of South Africa, borders which have no relationship to tribal or ethnic groupings. Immigrant workers from across these borders are horribly abused; for example, white farmers recruit Mozambican laborers, then call the cops on payday to have them deported. The cops, courts and military that enforced apartheid have remained intact. Now top ANC women government ministers run a profit-making deportation center filled with desperate immigrant workers. The ANC touts this as an example of blacks seeking "a stake in the economy"—women get to take part in cutting the throats of the South African and immigrant working masses.

Another "nation-building exercise" is Desmond Tutu's ongoing Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings, where vicious apartheid murderers are amnestied. These hearings are intended as a safety valve to defuse the just anger of those whose families and comrades were murdered, tortured or imprisoned by the bloody apartheid regime. What's important here is that the murderers and torturers are *still in power!*

Some may ask, "Why can't the Mandela regime change this?" Reformists and liberals hail the ANC for leading the "liberation" struggle and claim that the victory against apartheid was ensured by the economic sanctions imposed by the Western imperialist powers. This is a fraud. How, then, did Nelson Mandela come to be catapulted from the horrors of imprisonment in Robben Island to the pinnacle of government in Cape Town?

Increasingly, the rigid structures of apartheid had begun to collide with the need for skilled black labor to increase profits. At the same time, the growth of a powerful and organized black proletariat posed an ever-sharper challenge

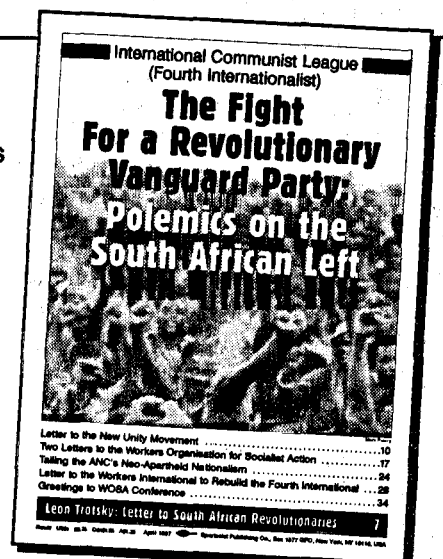
International Communist League Pamphlet

Letters and articles presenting the Marxist position on key questions of debate on the South African left: for revolutionary proletarian opposition to the "neo-apartheid" government of the now bourgeois-nationalist ANC; the debate over a "mass workers party"; the Trotskyist program of permanent revolution vs. the doctrine of "nation-building" in colonial and neocolonial countries.

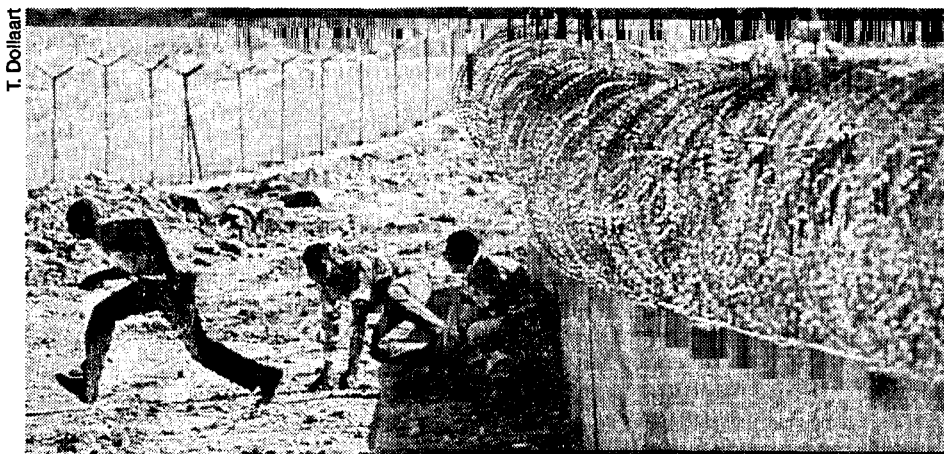
US\$1 Rand2 (40 pages)

Make checks payable/mail to:

Spartacist Publishing Co., Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116, USA
Spartacist, PostNet Suite 248, Carlton Centre, Level 100, Shop 140
Commissioner Street, Johannesburg 2001, South Africa



Mozambicans scramble across border into South Africa. ANC-led government enforces deportations of immigrant workers, refugees.



T. Dollart

to the entire system of apartheid capitalism. The township revolts and mass stayaway strikes of the mid-1980s cracked the apartheid state's rigid controls over the urban black working masses. In 1985, the powerful COSATU labor federation was formed, combining many of the burgeoning black industrial unions. The level of social ferment was reflected in the fact that many black workers and youth openly espoused the cause of communism and were drawn—mistakenly—to the SACP.

The installation of the ANC-dominated government in 1994 was also directly connected to the capitalist counter-revolution in East Europe and the Soviet Union earlier in the decade. The Soviet Union had sponsored the ANC and the closely allied SACP. Like other petty-bourgeois nationalist movements in the "Third World," the ANC sought to maneuver between Moscow and Washington. But with the counter-revolutionary destruction of the USSR, Mandela & Co. went pleading to the U.S. and other imperialist powers. His imperialist sponsors brokered the "power sharing" deal between the ANC and the apartheid Nationalist Party, and celebrated in every Western financial center when it succeeded.

Women and the Anti-Apartheid Struggle

Historians who try to write about the struggles of black women in South Africa have noted that this history is difficult to reconstruct because writing about it was banned. Nonetheless, there is a long history of black women activists organizing against apartheid pass laws, boycotting high rents, mobilizing against transport fares and defending the right to brew beer.

Until 1913, only men had to carry passes. From 1913 through 1920, black women carried out one of the only successful early protest campaigns against the pass laws. Women in the Orange Free State refused to carry passes, and hundreds were thrown into jail. The jails in small rural towns grew so full of women resisters that many were carted or marched to jails elsewhere. The government finally backed down, and women did not carry passes until the 1950s, when they moved to the cities in increasing numbers. In 1956, a march on Pretoria to protest the pass laws drew 20,000 women—mainly black, but also including coloured, Indian and white. As protests continued around the country, the apartheid rulers responded by burning homes to the ground and carrying out beatings, shootings, arrests and banishment. In the Sharpeville massacre of March 1960, police opened fire on thousands of blacks demonstrating against the pass laws, killing 69.

As growing numbers of coloured, Indian and black women became part of the modern proletariat after World War II, women workers also began to play a leading role in labor struggles. In the 1940s and '50s, food and canning workers in the fruit-growing areas of the Western Cape were largely led by women, both coloured and black. In the Transvaal, black women were driven into the cities because of growing impoverishment, and over half were employed in the clothing industry. The garment workers union there organized a branch for black women even before it allowed in black men. In 1954, unionized black women in Johannesburg protested racist pay reductions in the face of constant attempts by the employers to pit white, black and coloured workers against each other. Two years later in Port Elizabeth, the cannery owners were forced to back down as black women led factory-based protests against the pass laws.

The pass laws were part of the increasingly draconian laws about residence requirements, movement restrictions and exclusions from union organization which drove women out of the urban areas—and out of employment. For many, all that was left in the cities was domestic service. Nevertheless, black women continued to enter industry, and the 1970s and '80s marked a rise in militancy. Massive strikes in Durban from 1972 to 1974 nearly brought the city to a halt. These strikes were very significant. They shattered the atmosphere of intimidation and enforced silence that had been imposed on the country in the wake of the 1960 Sharpeville massacre. In some textile mills, African women were the first to down tools.

In 1973, women rag sorters in Pinetown came out on strike. By the end of the day, every factory of one of the largest multinational corporations in Natal had been shut down by strikes which lasted up to seven days and ended in wage concessions. Strikes spread through 1974 in the Eastern Cape mills where black and Indian women were concentrated. By 1980, when more massive strikes broke out, women made up 70 percent of the workforce in the mills. In Port Elizabeth, coloured women fighting for union recognition sparked an international boycott of Eveready batteries in 1978. In the South Cape, black and coloured women led the most significant strike in the food and canning industry in the 1970s, achieving victory after seven months and a national boycott.

Forge a Bolshevik Workers Party!

Political groups which are simply the left wing of the existing capitalist order cannot liberate women, or anyone

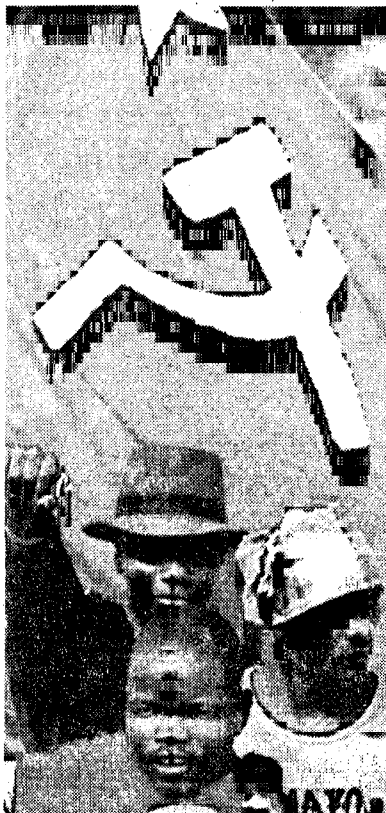
else for that matter. Petty-bourgeois nationalists like the Azanian People's Organisation and the Pan Africanist Congress, as well as the reformist and centrist left, all play the role of pressure groups on the ANC and project some long period of capitalist stability for South Africa. For its part, the reformist SACP is the chain that binds the most militant and class-conscious workers to their class enemies through the nationalist popular front. As part of the fight for a revolutionary proletarian party, we seek to split the most politically advanced workers from the SACP.

The Workers' Organisation for Socialist Action (WOSA), linked to the reformist Socialist Action group here in the U.S., was behind the "Workers List Party" (WLP) which ran in the 1994 elections. We extended critical support to the WLP because it ran *against* the ANC and drew a crude class line against bourgeois nationalism. But while claiming to pose a working-class alternative, it never directly criticized the ANC as a capitalist party. In fact, WOSA consistently echoes the ANC's "nation-building" rhetoric and denies the reality of the ethnic and tribal conflicts that are being exacerbated under the bourgeois ANC government. More recently, WOSA has been trying to put together an anti-Leninist lash-up which dismisses the continuing relevance of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution (see "Death of Communism" Confab in South Africa," *Workers Vanguard* No. 682, 16 January).

The reformist Socialist Workers Organisation, which is the counterpart to Tony Cliff's Socialist Workers Party in Britain and the International Socialist Organization in the U.S., supported the ANC in 1994. The hallmark of this outfit was its capitulation to Cold War imperialism, refusing to defend the remaining gains of the Russian Revolution and cheering the capitalist counterrevolutions which destroyed the Soviet degenerated workers state and the bureaucratically deformed workers states of East Europe.

The October Revolution showed the way forward for countries like South Africa. Under the leadership of the Bolshevik Party of Lenin and Trotsky, the capitalist class was expropriated and a workers state was erected on the foundations of a planned, collectivized economy—the precondition for an egalitarian socialist society. This happened in a country with a small but socially concentrated working class, a large, backward peasantry and many national minorities. The Bolshevik Revolution was the greatest defeat for world imperialism and the greatest victory for the world working class. It represented an enormous leap particularly for women.

The Bolsheviks understood that you cannot simply abolish the economic functions of the family, you must replace it. The Soviet government immediately removed all impediments to legal equality, giving women the right to vote, breaking the hold of the church over marriage and divorce by making them simple matters of civil registration. The Bolsheviks legalized abortion, set up literacy schools, out-



Gubb/JB Pictures

Reformist SACP betrays aspirations of pro-communist workers, carries out capitalist dictates as part of new government.

lawed discrimination against homosexuals, abolished the concept of illegitimacy, established day-care facilities, communal dining rooms and laundries. In an isolated, backward country, their efforts could only hint at the possibilities for women had socialist revolution spread to the advanced industrial countries. The consolidation of the Stalinist bureaucracy, whose nationalist dogma of "socialism in one country" glorified the backwardness of the young Soviet state and opposed international extension of the revolution, led to a reversal of many of the Bolsheviks' policies in regard to women as well. We stand in the revolutionary *internationalist* tradition of the Bolsheviks.

For South African workers, revolutionary internationalism is a matter of life and death. A proletarian revolution there would immediately face the imperialists, particularly America's ruthless rulers. One obvious and central ally of a black-centered workers government in South Africa would be class-conscious black workers in the U.S. American blacks have always seen in South African apartheid an image of their oppression as a race-color caste here, and a revolutionary party in the U.S. will have a large black component. These links can only be forged through the construction of internationalist vanguard parties in South

Africa and the U.S. And it is only through the fight for Trotskyist parties as part of a reformed Fourth International that the struggle for women's emancipation everywhere can go forward, because only such a vanguard party has a program to liberate them. For women's liberation through socialist revolution! For a Bolshevik workers party, a tribune of the people! For world socialist revolution! ■

Women and Revolution

Issue No. 44
Winter 1994–
Spring 1995

\$1 (40 pages)

Women and Revolution



Order from/make checks payable to:
Spartacist Publishing Co., Box 1377 GPO
New York, NY 10116, USA

International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist)

International Center: Box 7429 GPO, New York, NY 10116, USA

Spartacist League of Australia

Spartacist ANZ Publishing Co.
GPO Box 3473, Sydney, NSW, 2001, Australia



Marxist newspaper of the Spartacist League of Australia
\$5/4 issues (1 year) in Australia and seamail elsewhere
\$7/4 issues—Airmail

Spartacist League/Britain

Spartacist Publications
PO Box 1041, London NW5 3EU, England



Marxist newspaper of the Spartacist League/Britain
£3/1 year International rate: £7—Airmail
Europe outside Britain and Ireland: £4

Trotskyist League of Canada/ Ligue trotskyste du Canada

Spartacist Canada Publishing Association
Box 6867, Station A, Toronto, Ontario M5W 1X6, Canada



English-language newspaper of the Trotskyist League/
Ligue trotskyste
\$3/4 issues International rate: \$8—Airmail

Spartakist-Arbeiterpartei Deutschlands

SpAD, c/o Verlag Avantgarde
Postfach 5 55, 10127 Berlin, Germany



Herausgegeben von der Spartakist-Arbeiterpartei
Deutschlands
6 Ausgaben: DM 5,—
Auslandsabo: DM 15,— Übersee Luftpost: DM 20,—

Dublin Spartacist Group

PO Box 2944, Dublin 1, Republic of Ireland

Ligue trotskyste de France

Le Bolchévik, BP 135-10, 75463 Paris Cedex 10, France



Publication de la Ligue trotskyste de France
4 numéros: 20FF Hors Europe: 30FF (avion: 40FF)
Etranger: mandat poste international

Spartacist Group India/Lanka

Write to International Communist League, New York, USA

Lega trotskista d'Italia

Walter Fidacaro, C.P. 1591, 20101 Milano, Italy



Organo della Lega trotskista d'Italia
Abbonamento a 4 + supplemento: L. 5.000
Europa: L. 8.000 Paesi extraeuropei: L. 12.000

Spartacist Group Japan

PO Box 49, Akabane Yubinkyoku, Kita-ku, Tokyo 115, Japan



Publication of the Spartacist Group Japan
Subscription (2 years): 500¥ International: 1000¥

Grupo Espartaquista de México

J. Vega, Apdo. Postal 1251, Admon. Palacio Postal 1
C.P. 06002, México D.F., Mexico



Publicación del Grupo Espartaquista de México
México: 4 números/\$10
Extranjero: US\$4/4 (vía aérea) US\$2/4 (vía terrestre/marítima)

Spartacist/Moscow

Write to Le Bolchévik, Paris, France



Spartakusowska Grupa Polski

Platforma Spartakusowców, Skrytka Poczтова 148
02-588 Warszawa 48, Poland



Pismo Spartakusowskiej Grupy Polski
Cztery kolejne numery: 6,- zł

Spartacist/South Africa

Spartacist, PostNet Suite 248
Carlton Centre, Level 100, Shop 140
Commissioner Street, Johannesburg 2001, South Africa

Spartacist League/U.S.

Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116, USA



Biweekly organ of the Spartacist League/U.S.
\$10/22 issues (1 year)
International: \$25/22 issues—Airmail \$10/22 issues—Seamail

Women and Revolution



Women and Permanent Revolution in South Africa



Chris Qwazi



Mbuzeni Zulu

ANC neo-apartheid regime perpetuates superexploitation of black working masses and oppression of women: squatters live in rural poverty (left), women workers at SA Dried Fruit protest degradation on the job.

The appearance of this article in Spartacist under the Women and Revolution masthead is in accordance with a motion passed at the ICL's Third International Conference. W&R has been published by the ICL's American section since 1973 but, as the conference motion noted, it has increasingly acquired an international readership. As the SL/U.S. presently lacks the resources to continue publishing W&R as a separate journal, the motion directed the International Secretariat to publish appropriate articles under the W&R masthead in Spartacist.

This article is based on a presentation given by comrade Karen Cole at Spartacist League/U.S. forums in California. It is reprinted from the SL/U.S. newspaper, Workers Vanguard No. 684, 13 February 1998.

It is now nearly four years since Nelson Mandela's African National Congress (ANC) proclaimed a "non-racial" South Africa and assumed the reins of government. The election of the ANC-dominated government symbolized the formal end to the entrenched system of racist apartheid. But what exists today is neo-

apartheid capitalism, a system which remains based on the brutal superexploitation of black labor. This neo-apartheid regime rules at the behest and in the interests of the white capitalist ruling class, which continues to lord it over the vast majority of black, coloured (mixed-race) and Indian people.

Assisting the bourgeois-nationalist ANC in this are the South African Communist Party (SACP) and the largely SACP-dominated leadership of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), who have joined together in a "tripartite alliance," a nationalist popular front in which the workers organizations are tied to the cart of bourgeois nationalism and, through that, to the capitalist exploiters. The expectations of the black African masses have been widely shattered.

Unemployment among black workers—ranging to levels as high as 50 percent—is, if anything, more severe today than it was before. The ANC's promises of housing for the millions who live in run-down shantytowns in the urban townships or in rural backwaters have proved to be a cruel hoax. Far from eliminating—or even substantially ameliorating—the brutal exploitation, oppression and poverty suffered by the mass of the population, the ANC in government has

continued on page 41

